THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM & KARBALA

A series of Lectures
by
Prof. Karrar Husain

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PREFACE

To understand the significance of Karabala in Islamic thought, we focus our attention on the person, who was demanding the pledge of allegiance *(Be'at)* and the person from whom this pledge was being demanded.

Imam Husain was the symbol of God's guidance on earth; in fact the substance of that guidance. It was his duty and privilege to ensure the purity and the vitality of the *'Deen'*. He was the last refuge/resort of *'Deen'* and embodiment of Islam, a living *Shaheed* because every moment of his life bore witness to his Master, the Lord, his God. Islam was his life, his love, the love for which the sacrifice of life was the fulfilment of life.

Demanding the pledge of allegiance was Yazid, who was the representative of lust for power and wealth. He was out to distort Islam and exploit it in order to strengthen and legitimise his ruler. He had just one problem, one constraint, the personality of Husain, because the very presence of Husain was a protest against all that he stood for. It was a protest, a challenge, a threat, a condemnation. In Husain's presence, Yazid seemed to be and felt to be totally insignificant and guilty, inspite of his pomp and circumstance.
There is an essential antagonism between the two, an incompatability. These two cannot exist together. Yazid must try his best to bend Husain before his will or break him into pieces. This obstacle must be defeated or destroyed.

As far as Husain was concerned, allegiance to Yazid would have been a betrayal of God, a violation of his nature. There was no question of a choice. It was simply impossible, absolutely impossible.

It was in this background that the event of Karbala took place, an event which was as tragic as was inevitable. This event with all its details was foreseen only too clearly by

Imam Husain himself, who in one of his earlier narrations spoke as follows:

" If the Deen of God can be saved only through my sacrifice, here I stand in the presence of God, offering in love and gratefulness, all that I possess, the lives of me and my dear ones ready for all sufferings and humiliation, for all this belongs to God and God is always with me. The 'Deen' of God must be saved. Where are the swords of enemies ? Come and get me, for I am ready."

It is only in the fitness of things that for all future times, the event of Karbala and the personality of Imam Husain would become the centre point or the focus of the tradition which can be called the Islamic life and thought. Karbala was not an act confined to a place or a time. Its meanings are inexhaustable. When we see the impact of Karbala on the minds of men, how it has inspired them, then we see that from age to age, its message has been in accordance with the needs of that age. As for the meanings of Islam, it is only when it is seen in that perspective, that the full universal meaning of Islam comes out.

This book talks about some of the major themes in Islamic thought. It talks about the message of Islam, the seed of faith, the circle of faith, the Islamic Society, Quranic interpretation of rise and fall of nations, the place of *Imamat*, the place of *Amr-e-Hukumat* and *Amr-e-Hidayat*, guidance and governance and gives an insight into the event of Karbala, and mission of Imam Husain.

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Publishers

INTRODUCTION

At a stage in his journey to Kufa when Imam Husain's progress was intercepted and he was surrounded by the vanguard of Yazid's army, he, after giving due praise to Allah, addressed them thus :

" Ye people! the Prophet of God has said that whoever sees a ruler who is a tyrant,

who forbids what is permitted by God and permits what is forbidden by God, who breaks the covenant of God, reverses the way *(Sunnah)* of the Prophet, and oppresses and represses God's people,

and after seeing all this, makes no protest, by word or action, then he will be deserving of the same punishment from God as the tyrant.

See ye not that these rulers have relapsed from obedience to God and submitted to the authority of Satan; they are spreading mischief on earth; have abrogated the laws of God; look upon the revenues of the state as their private property, and it is my right and privilege, more than of anyone else, to protest against this state of affairs, for am I not the nearest to the Prophet ".

The grounds of the Great Protest are clearly set forth in this illuminating text. Very humbly, I venture to add just a few comments.

(i) A tyrant is one who rules the people against their will, who legitimises and secures support for his government, through *be'at* or by force or fraud.

(ii) In Islamic society, the Quran is the source of law and God is the absolute legislator. The law and the Truth are inseparable. To permit what is forbidden by God and to forbid what is permitted by God is not amending the law but abrogating it, for the law can only be interpreted, applied and extended. It amounts to distorting the Truth, suspending the Rule of Law, and substituting for God's law one's own will directed by personal interests and desires.

(iii) The Islamic society is a revolutionary society committed to promote certain values in life with a view to establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Islam is a pledge, a submission, a covenant with God to promote those values. The way, *(Sunnah)* of the Prophet is the custodian of those values. If an innovation is introduced which is favourable to the growth of those values, it is good innovation *(bid 'at-i-hasana)* and is tentamount to *ijtihad.* If an innovation is introduced which is detrimental to the growth of those values, it is bad innovation *(bid 'at-i-saiyya)* and is what you would call in modern parlance, a deviation or revisionism. Thus breaking the covenant of God and reversing the *Sunnah* of the Prophet means betraying the Islamic revolution and backsliding into the old way of paganism or bringing about a new order of paganism *(Sunnat-i-Jahialiya).*

(iv) The condition of mischief (Fasaad), according to the Quran is not merely a state of lawlessness, disorder and anarchy but a state in which there is little social freedom and justice and

is quite compatible with the presence of power and wealth in society. More than anything else, it is a distemper of wealth and power. More precisely, it seems to be a state where the government is all powerful and the ruling classes are wealthy and the people are suppressed, oppressed and repressed. Thus those who lived in the city of *"Iram"* of lofty pillars, the like of which were not produced in all the land, and the *"Thamud"* who hewed out their dwellings among the rocks of the valley, and the "Pharoah", lord of stakes, are said to have spread mischief in the lands, for they transgressed beyond bounds.

(v) The state revenues are a trust; the ruler is the trustee; the people are the beneficiaries of the trust. If public money is used for the aggrandisement of the ruler, and for pampering a ruling class, be it civilian or military, and buying their support for the government, in short, if it is used in any way that is calculated to serve personal or class interests rather than promote general good, then it is a breach of trust.

(vi) Every muslim is individually and collectively accountable for the persistence of tyranny and mischief in society *(zulm-o-fasaad)*, for acquiescence in many cases is tentamount to abetment. Those who claim to be leaders bear greater responsibility.

The indictment, translated in current idiom, would run somewhat as follows :

" Yazid is neither a rightful, nor a just ruler. He is a usurper and a despot, even though he might have given a constitutional colouring to his rule. He has suspended the Rule of law. His will is law. He is destroying the values of the Islamic Revolu-

tion and converting it into an imperialism. He is corrupting the *millat*, both by spreading fear and conferring public favours. He is using public money not for public welfare but for personal gain and glory, and for building up a class of nobles and raising an army of mercenaries, who would support his government, right or wrong, and in return have a free hand in oppressing the people. It is duty of every muslim to oppose and protest against this state of affairs, as effectively as he can; the higher his status spiritually, intellectually or socially the greater his responsibility ".

The technique of Imam Husain's protest was as unique as it was effective. He could have sent his agents to different parts of the muslim lands and raised a host of his partisans and supporters in Yathrib, and Yemen and Iraq. He did nothing of the sort, nothing to divide or split the muslim *millat*. He just refused to acknowledge the *Khilafat* of Yazid. He became aware of the secret plots to have him murdered; the Machiavellian practice of secret murders had been introduced into the muslim statecraft. He was not safe anywhere. Death was his destiny but he was still free to choose the form in which he would meet death. Hedged in by death on all sides, he struck out a path to conquer death. He, with his family and friends, started for Kufa, from where had come a call for guidance, to which he must respond if only to justify himself in the eyes of God and man. On the way he was surrounded by the armies of Yazid. Firm and unshaken in his resolve not to submit and thus give his approbation to the way of life, of which Yazid was the symbol, he and his followers suffered greatly and fought bravely till they were all butchered and his women and children taken prisoners. By not relying on numbers and drawing entirely upon the infinite spiritual resources with which God has endowed man, he gave a new dimension to

man's struggle for Truth and Justice. This can come only of a complete resignation to the will of God and the success of this method is directly proportionate to the purity of the motive with which it is pursued, and the freedom of the motive from any taint of selfishness. The helplessness of Imam Husain was his most effective weapon; the greater the helplessness, the greater the force and effectiveness of the weapon. His enemies could only oppress, but every act of oppression perpetrated by his enemies was his gain; the more they oppressed, and they could do little else, the more he gained. His enemies, thus, played into his hands and his utter defeat became his absolute victory. The tragedy of Karbala was the most glorious vindication of man and a witness to the almost divine powers that are in him. Leaders of a revolution sometimes murder their political enemies and call it a 'purge'. Imam Husain purged the Islamic revolution with his own blood. And if the purpose of a purge is to re-establish revolutionary values in their vigour and purity, then it was the most successful 'purge' in the history of revolutions. "Verily" says Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti "Imam Husain put the Testimony of Faith (There is no God but Allah) on a firm foundation".

While, he on the one hand, assiduously projected the Truth, by giving it voice and vision, it was his scrupulous concern that the vision should not become distorted by the fierce spirit of partisanship and factionalism. The technique of self-sacrifice could not be consummated in the raw and heated atmosphere of a civil war. It was Imam Hasan's 'Treaty of Peace' which made the achievement of Karbala possible. In fact, there is the same relationship between Imam Hasan's "Peace" and the Achievement of Karbala, as there is between the peace of Hudaibiya and the victory of Mecca. But desirable, very desirable as unity is, it is equally necessary to em-

phasize the right basis of unity. For there are different kinds of unity. There is a unity among a pack of wolves or a gang of robbers who are on rampage, marauding God's fair land. There is a unity among a flock of sheep, when exposed to a common danger. Yazid was also trying to impose a kind of unity on the muslims by crushing all opposition and forcing people to submit to the judgement of imperialism. The supreme sacrifice of Imam Husain recorded on the tablets of time the great truth that Islamic unity is only a reflection of the one-ness of God and manifests itself in the brotherhood of muslims. Brotherhood procures political freedom and precludes glaring economic inequalities. Such a unity alone is meaningful. Any other kind of unity is either a reflex condition devoid of any moral value or a shape of tyranny.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM

This programme which we are starting this evening, looks like an innovation. But it's not ; it's not an English version of the traditional *Majalis*. Of course, one would very much like to have our traditional *Majalis* in almost all languages of the world. Our aim, however, is a bit different but very important. It is that, I would in my very humble way, try to explicate some of the basic principles of Islam, some of the Quranic themes which are projected in the event of Karbala. Of course, only some of them, would be discussed, though Karbala holds the essence of the meaning of the full Quran, of full Islam, in terms of human sacrifice. So, we are going to explicate just a few principles, a few basic principles in these meetings. It may serve as a background, or the right perspective in which the event of Karbala is to be understood. It is to the tradition of Islamic life and thought, that the event of Karbala belongs. And it is only when it is seen and understood against this background that we can get the full universal meaning out of it. You may just treat these words as an introduction or as a prelude to the *Majlis* which you are going to listen after this talk of mine. We shall be talking of the message of Islam ; we shall talking of the seed of faith, the circle of faith, the relationship between man and society, the place of *Imamat*, the place of *Amr-e-Hukumat* and *Amr-e-Hidayat*, guidance and governance ; and we shall try to have some insights into the event of Karbala as far as we can have.

And now first things first i.e. 'what is the message of Islam ?' The message of Islam has been explained, not at one place,

but at several places in the Holy Quran. Somehow, it is too often ignored. That seems to be human nature. It is the most basic principles of life which are often most ignored. The divine purpose of the advent of the Holy Prophet, of instituting this Ministry of Prophethood, has been set forth in very unambiguous and clear terms by God. We may put it like this ; in our words, very inadequate of course. The Prophet has been raised amongst us as a great favour of God, the highest favour of God, the mercy of God, in that He has sent His mercy personified. And what are his functions, what does he do? In the first place, he recites the verses of the Holy Book. The word used for verses is the *Ayat-Allah* or the "signs of God" This word "sign", as you know has a very wide connotation. Everything that has been made by God and put in its place in the universe, is a sign of god ; it bears the signature of God. So the prophet recites to us, to the people, the verses, the signs of God. That's his first function. And the second is, that he will purify, he will refine, he will sublimate yourselves, the selves of men, the personalities of men. Thirdly, he will teach the knowledge of the Book and Wisdom. Well, these are the functions of the Prophet, as enumerated in the Quran. That's why the Prophet has been raised, amongst us.

Now let's take these functions one by one. The first is that he recites the verses or the signs of God. Now my friends, look at the general condition, the situation of men, and what do you find? We find that man is too often involved in his own desires, in his own anxieties, in his sorrows, in his sufferings and the lures of pleasure. Well, that is he gives all his self to these. The world is too much with us and we fail to put some very basic questions to ourselves. What, after all is the purpose of our life here? Why have we been sent here? Well, what is our life : an eternity of darkness on one side, and another

eternity of darkness on the other side. A brief span of light, coming from out of one darkness and passing into another darkness. What can be the meaning of this life after all? Is there any purpose, any meaning in this life, or is it some cruel joke which has been played upon us at our cost by some cruel god? So what is our duty, how are we going to live, what is the way which can lead us to our fulfilment? These are some of the very fundamental questions, but unfortunately we try to run away from these questions, and try to wrap ourselves al most totally in heedlessness. We don't try to give any heed to these fundamental questions.

There is nothing so common and so universal as this coming of man into the world and passing away from the other end. Now, in this predicament what does the man do? How does he manage this situation? He raises some idols, because he is pursued by fear and he has some hopes. He is pursuing those hopes and he is pursued by fears himself. And these idols, well these are some times idols of stocks and stones, sometimes of human institutions Sometimes these idols are the idols of the self, one s own passions, his lust, his wrath, his envy, the gods he is worshipping all the time. These gods that he carries within himself, rule his conduct. It may also be the idols of society, the idols of wealth, the idol of power, the idol of authority. The sole aim of his life is endless accumulation of power and pelf. In the Holy Book, that has been called *"Takasur"* and *"Tafakhur"* that is trying to have as many things as possible so that one may pride over others, or he may assert his pride over others. This seems to be the main business of life, which is being followed by men in this world. Following these idols or worshipping these idols is not in order to have some guidance from them, no, not that . but in the vain hope of protecting ourselves from some harm or loss and of coming

to some good end profit through placating and pleasing our gods. This is our attitude towards the idols of stock and stones and this is our attitude towards the idols which we carry within and this is also our attitude towards the social idols, the idols of money, wealth and of power and authority. Such is the situation of man, my friends, the usual business of life as it is and in this situation he hears a voice, the voice of the Prophet. as if coming from another world. I would like to tell you one thing. The verses of the Holy Book are not in their significance, confined to one place and time. The Holy Prophet, recited these verses to the people of Arabia in his days and he is reciting these verses to us also, only if we have ears to hear. He is reciting those verses. So this seems to be a voice coming from some other world, reaching down to the depths of soul, stirring the sleeping water within us, a voice which is awakening us, as if it were making us God conscious of our destiny, of some reality which lies beyond our common business of life, this profit and loss of life. So, it seems as if there is an awakening within us. In the Holy Book, it has been said that there is a covenant between God and man. We forget it on account of our heedlessness. Well, what the Prophet does is that he tries to take away that veil of heedlessness so that we may be able to see and hear, so that we may be able to remember that covenant which we have with God. That's the first thing, there is an awakening, an awakening to the hope of a new life, a rebirth, the beginning of regeneration as it were.

And what is the substance of these verses which he tell us?
He is calling us to God ; then he points out to us our way, our path, how we should conduct ourselves in this life, the path of salvation, the path of fulfilment, the path of protecting ourselves from the harms and hazards, the delusions and temptations. the sorrows and sufferings that lie in ambush all along

the path of life. He is telling us, how to conquer them. He is pointing out to us that conduct of life which it is our duty and our joy to follow. He is asking us to look beyond this life. Well, he is telling us that this life is not futile, it is not meaningless and absurd ; it has been given to us for some great purpose. Nothing has been created in this world, that is in vain and of no purpose. Everything that has been created in this world has been created with truth. Well, now we try to understand the meaning of life. We begin to understand that beyond this mortality of life, the mortality of existence there are some abiding phases of life also, another life. Now we begin to understand that. We now understand and believe that just as life is followed by death, death is also followed by life. Just as death comes out of life, life also comes out of death. And this understanding and belief makes us conscious that we are responsible human beings, and we shall be held accountable for everything that we do and everything that we think and feel. This sense of accountability, gives a direction to our life. Now we do not dissipate ourselves. Now we are not pulled this way and that way by our contending passions. Now we have got the path set for us. And now we know our duty. So in these verses, the Holy Prophet tells us the law of the success and failure of man and of the rise and fall of nations. He awakens in us the faculty of discrimination between good and evil. We know by intuition and reason what is going to be the reward of good, the result of good and the consequence of evil. While that awakening, that discrimination in us, that impulse to nurture our moral self, is that which makes us human in the real sense, in the full sense of the word. Well, this is what he is trying to do.

And now what do we find as a result. We find that our inner self has become refined, our desires are changed, our aims are

changed. Now life has a meaning in it. Now we are not going to disperse ourselves. We now witness a process of integration of selves. May I say that we have been awakened into a new life. My friends, just as you have an outer form, you have an inner pattern also. The inner man and the outer form individualises you. The great artist has created so many different individuals and yet not one like another. Now what these verses of the Holy Book say to us is that the inner self that lay dull and dormant becomes awakened into life ; the stone is turned into mirror and when it has become a mirror, illumined, it has become capable of reflecting and absorbing and receiving knowledge. Before that, we were not capable of receiving knowledge ; now when we have been prepared into proper ground, proper soil has been prepared, and then the seed is laid. The seed of faith, of knowledge, of *Ilmul Kitab*, the Knowledge of the Book. My friends, reciting the verses is one thing and attaining the *Ilmul Kitab* is something quite different. *Ilmul Kitab*, is a high attainment, very high attainment, given only to God's elite ; that is the path. As far as reciting verses is concerned, the Prophet of God recites verses to one and all, we may try to plug our ears with cotton of heedlessness but the Prophet of God does recite verses and the listener by the grace of God attains *Ilm-ul-Kitab* according to his degree. Now you have got the book of God, you have got the book of nature, you have got the book of self, you have got the scroll of history, and then you realise you are given the vision that everything in universe is working according to Nature that has been created by God. Well, then you realise the oneness of all these things and their inexhaustible meaning as signs of God. You have come to *Tauheed*, to oneness of vision. Now your knowledge is not like a burden, which you are carrying on your shoulders ; now your knowledge is that light which you are following and which is guiding you. Well, this

knowledge of the book he gives us and he teaches us wisdom also.

Now, wisdom is not some special science. It is the science of sciences which puts everything in its place, every science in its place, which tells you the worth and value of every science, that is wisdom. Well, wisdom, i.e. the concentration of all knowledge into one quality, may I say summation of the whole Quran in one point, that is wisdom. Well, the wise man of God, he sees the whole Quran in one point. He is that point himself ; so that's wisdom. Wisdom is that which takes you along doubts and your anxieties and your uncertainties to certainly, from your *shak*, your scepticism to certainty, your *Yakeen*. It puts you there. It gives you sight and insight, it enables you to make judgement. There are two categories of reality, the category of permanance and the category of change. The principles are permanent, the events are changing every moment, hourly changing, momentary changing. Now how to apply those permanent principles to the changing demands of time? How to reconcile these two apparently paradoxical categories of reality, of permanance and change? Wisdom tells us all that. Every single action that the wise man does or he does not do is fraught with meaning, has got some permanent meaning. The really wise man, the God's elect, has to be understood as far as our knowledge can go, as far as our capacity can go.

Well that is, my friends, the purpose of the Prophet's mission, of this divine ministry. We now become different man. Our aims are different, our values are different, our nature as it were has changed. We have been awakened into a new life ; we have become different persons. Well, and when we become a different person, when there is a change in man, in the in-

ner man, there is chage in the outer world also. Change in the outer world begins with the inner change. Every revolution in order to be abiding and lasting and meaningful must start from this revolution in the inner self. Now if we look at the battlefield of Karbala, if we look at the event of Karbala, what do we find? On the one hand there are those who believe in God, those who have had their very being in the Prophetic Revelation, as well as those who have revolutionised themselves, their nature, their values, their meaning. Well, they are the fit persons to revolutionise the whole world. So on the one hand are these men, and on the other side, there are hordes of men putting their faith and belief and their aims and values in the external things of life, worshippers of power, worshippers of wealth, worshippers of authority. Blindness fills them ; lust pulls them ; fear pushes them. They are afraid of the challenge which is posed by these men of God ; the men of God who are led by the Imam, who are led by the God's elect. And now what has been the result of that clash? The result of that clash if I may put in one sentence. The result of it is that these men of God win their victory even when it seems they have been defeated. Those salves of the world, those salves of idols of wealth and power, they lose their battle even when it seems that they have won the battle. There you have the two types of men, i.e. those who have revolutionised themselves ; well, men of God who are doing the work of God, the co-workers with God doing God's work which shall never perish and others, who are the slaves of the world and whose biggest victory is ephemeral and hollow. Well, this is the difference between these two sets of men. So, we may say that in the battlefield of Karbala, that's a situation in which two sets of persons, two sets of human beings very alike in their external forms, very alike in their creed, clash fatally, because they are world apart in their nature and in their humanity. Those

other men also profess Islam. They also say their prayers, they also give Zakat to the poor, they also perform the rituals which have been prescribed by religion, but the spirit of God has not touched their inner self they are still the slaves of worldly authority, they are still pursuing wealth and they still think in this way by suppressing truth and suppressing opposition by force of arms, they will be able to suppress truth also. But truth stands triumphant, and in no other situation more absolutely triumphant than through the absolute sacrifices of the witnesses of truth. Well, my friends, this is the message of Islam, the message of Islam which is illustrated, which is confirmed, which is projected in the battlefield of Karbala. And with God is the Final Judgement.

THE SEED OF FAITH

What is the purpose, what is the aim, why was the Prophet sent to this world? Very briefly, I pointed out that the aim of this Prophetic mission is to elevate the level of consciousness. of awareness, to make of man a different person, to pull him from one condition of life which is called the life of worldliness *"Al-Hayat-al-Duniya"* to another, the life of goodness *"Al-Hayat-al-Tayyaba"*. It is a journey from the stage of the carnal self *Nafs-e-Ammara* to the peaceful self *Nafs-e-Mutmaeena*, to change the quality of yourself and then to awaken you to the knowledge of truth, the knowledge of the Book, to awaken you into the knowledge and to enable you to judge and act wisely and justly and effectively. This aim has been pointed out in very unambigous and very clear words. Today we are going to talk about the seed of faith ; the seed of faith which is the root of all religious life and religious experience.

Now my friends, by ignoring the main purpose of the Prophetic ministry, the Prophetic mission, we fall into several falacies. As I said yesterday, such is the nature of man that the truths which are the most basic and the most important, are the most likely to be neglected and ignored. And the result of this neglect is that we fall into so many fallacies. The first fallacy is to believe or to think that the Quran is all Islam and that it is all sufficient. Perhaps, this is the first fallacy and the oldest fallacy. Well, I shall only ask you to picture to yourself the start of the Islamic mission ; how did it start? The Prophet, the seeker of Truth, the man of God receives a mission ; a charge. The mission is to go to the valley of men, to the world of men and to call them to God. Now the point is .

how many verses had been revealed by the time when the Prophet offered Islam to the earliest followers ; how many verses? What was that, which converted those early Muslims? Was it the Book? It was not that the Prophet collected all the verses that had been revealed to him and then developed all those verses into the form of a book just like Karl Marx, sitting and writing his book in the British Museum. It was not that he collected all the verses into a book and then he come down and presented that book to the people, just you may say like a prospectus, just like a plan or a project and the people read it and studied it and approved it and adopted it. This was a person, the Prophet, who sowed that seed of belief or faith in the hearts of men, I say who vitalised that seed of faith which lies within us and then he nurtured and quickened it with the word of God. The metaphor for faith in the Holy Book is, not that of a blue print, or a plan or a project. It is that of the sowing of a seed and the seed growing into a tree, the tree of life spreading over all the different aspects of life, reaching up to the sky, with its roots deep into the earth. That is the faith, the Word, the Book, the tree growing from a seed. And we have to remember and we have to keep it in mind that Islam is the Person and the Book.

The second fallacy grows out of the First. Without this tree of faith or tree of life growing within us what do we do? We did derive so many systems out of the Book, economic system of Islam, political system of Islam, moral system of Islam and a hundred systems of Islam, "using" the book, without that spark of faith or without that guiding light within us. This is, my friends what I call, performing a postmortem of the Book. A man is something more than one head plus two hands plus two legs plus one trunk, something more than that. In the same way the teaching of Islam is something more than eco-

nomic system of Islam and political system of Islam and social system of Islam all put together; something more than that. And what is that something more ; that something more is the spark of life, without which, the addition of one limb of body to another limb of body will not give you a human being. In the same way one system joined to another system will not give you Islam because Islam is a living truth, and does not bear fragmentation. That is the second fallacy which we commit. And all of this is because we have neglected or we have ignored the purpose of Prophetic ministry itself, the most basic thing.

All this leads to a very modern fallacy ; you may call it very modern deviation which is that we reduce religion to the status of an ideology. My friends, ideology deals with one aspect of social life, of social reality you may say, or of the eternal reality. Religion means the totality of the reality. What would you say of an ideology which starts with belief in the Unseen? Whose ideology can it be? It is God's Truth. It is *HAQ*.

The target of ideology is bringing about some change in one aspect of life; whereas the aim of religion and the end of religion is bringing about a total revolution within yourself and then of course, as a projection of it a revolution in the society, but first that revolution is within yourself.

As far as ideology is concerned, one ideology is opposed to another ideology but one religion is not opposed to another religion. Islam is not opposed to Christianity or Judaism or for the matter to any religion. Islam is not opposed to it; on the other hand we would say Islam fulfills it. Islam inherits it. The truth is one; light is one coming down in different ages.

So, this is reduction of Islam to the level of ideology and we are very happy to say that we have rediscovered Islam as an ideology. The opposite of Islamic truth is not Christian truth. The opposite of Truth or *HAQ* is *BATIL* or sheer falsehood.

Such are some of the fallacies What was the first teaching of the Holy Prophet? The Prophet said "say there is no God but Allah and prosper and flourish" ;that's what he said. But, my friends, one man says a thing, it glides over your head; another man says the same thing, it brings about a revolution in you. What matters is, who said it? The Messenger of God. And that became the beginning of a revolution, a thorough revolution, internal and external. The thing is that when man serves God, God gives him command over the hearts of men; total service, total command. If you stand at the cross–road and try to command and control the traffic, perhaps you may be arrested. But the Traffic Constable stands there and he commands and controls traffic; the greatest man and the highest man in the land obeys his order, his command. Why? Because he has authority and he derives his authority from the sovereign source. All authority belongs to God and only that authority is real which is derived from Him. The Prophet derives his authority from the sovereign source. We recite the same verses which the Holy Prophet recited. Well, I need not say what's the result of it. But when the Prophet recited those verses, those very verses, there was a revolution, there was light out of darkness. Person and Book, these are the two realities, the basic realities in every faith, in every religion. Some religions put emphasis on one, others put emphasis on the other. For instance, Judaism puts all out emphasis on Book or law; the commands, Christianity puts all out emphasis on the Person. Law and love are not antithetical; they are complementary. In Islam you have both together because the

truth lies in the essential oneness of the Book and the Person. The Book is eternal and the person is also eternal. The Prophet bequeathed two weighty Trusts for the guidance of the people - The Book and his Progeny. About the Imams of his Progeny, he said that our first is Muhammad and we are all Muhammad. So it is Muhammad who is eternally standing by the side of the Quran, the eternal in spirit and in Person.

Now, as a result of that Call what happens? The idols are repudiated; all those idols are repudiated, the idols of stocks and stones, the worship of the sun, moon, stars, those things that have been worshipped one time or the other. Man has bowed before almost everything in this world; the lowest and the meanest and the highest; so a repudiation of all those idols is also a repudiation of idols of society. Now, that brings about a struggle. That brings about a revolution, because our social idols will not relinquish their pride and the privileges. They will not agree to be demolished so easily. And first and last, the idols of our self, our lusts and appetites that are a part of ourselves. The more the idols are repudiated,the nearer a man approaches to his God. Repudiation of false gods is also the approach to God ; the only approach, the sure approach. This is the meaning of our *Kalimah*.

When the heart is cleansed of the abominations of idolatry, mysteries of life, of the relationship between man and God, the ancient truths, newly awakened begin to flash upon the mirror. The first relationship, the most primary, is the relationship between the Creator and His creature. Have you ever thought of the relation between Creator and creature? It is the spirit of the Creator that passes into the creation; the artist puts his signature on everything he creates. You

should know how to read it. So everything in this world glorifies God because everything has got that divine touch and has divine signature on it. The great handiwork of God which is called man, praises and prays, cries and complains and even curses his artist, his Creator which are just different forms of acknowledging Him For the Great Artist has breathed of His spirit into him.

The Creation is the mirror of the Creator; the man reflects divine attributes, hearing, seeing, understanding. He has got the faculty of discrimination of judgement; he has, in his own limited way, the power to create and command. He has the gift of personality, 'I am, I am", these words are worthy of only God but in our own small humble way, human beings, we, also say "I am". My ego is there, my self is there. Well that is the relationship, the first relationship that is between the Creator and the creature.

Another aspect of that relationship, is the relationship of the master and the servant. Now what is this relationship? Firstly, whatever the slave holds, he holds in trust for his master. Everything has been given to us as a trust; we are the trustees. We open our credit with God. Well, then what do we do? Once a master was asked a question, "Sir, what is the Islamic conception of property", and the master replied "what! we repeat this conception so many times in a day when we say *"Iyya kanabado wa Iyyakanastaeen;"*, "We are Thy slaves and of Thee do we seek help". A slave means one who owns nothing and whatever he owns, he owns as a trust for his master". So that's trust and responsibility also, accountability also; the slave is accountable to his master. So that is second relationship.

There are other aspects of this relationship too There must be some communication between the slave and the master otherwise this relationship cannot subsist, and so God speaks to man, and man speaks to his God also. God speaks to man through his Revelations. God speaks to man through His Signs; it is all the language of God, the word of God The creation of God is called the *Kalima* or the work: *Ayat* or the sign. God is speaking to us through history. God is speaking within us, guiding us, and God is speaking through the mouth of the Prophet; guiding us And we are also speaking to God Whenever we tend to forget Him we forget ourselves But whenever we are in trouble, whenever we are seeking guidance, whenever we do not know which way to turn, then we turn to God, we speak to God. We speak to God in our prayers, in our supplications, in our activity, in the silence of our soul. We speak to God when there is nobody to speak to. That communication between man and God is going on; and my friends, God is a co-worker with us. He works with us when we do His work. He is always with us. A sort of companionship, our refuge, our hope. There can be no feeling of fear, no sense of loneliness when we feel the companionship of God. But what are going to be the terms of this companionship, this equation between me and my God ; that is very much my lookout. I can come closer and closer to my God. When men make themselves devoid of their egotistic self, God fills them with His spirit.

That companionship, that is the meaning of *vilayat*, that is the meaning of friendship with God. One side of the coin is friendship with God. The other side of the same coin is compassion for man. It is such a man whom God elects for doing His work, for spreading, supporting, saving, restoring His *"Deen"*, the *Deen* of truth and justice and love. Such a man

stands for God and stands with God. He who stands with God, even if he is alone, even if all the world is against him, he is quite comforted. Storms are raging all around him, but look at the peace of his mind. Nothing but God, nothing but God. You think it is a battle, the battle of tribes You look to his trials and tribulations, his sufferings: these deserts and these battlefields, and the agonies: those sacrifices, those sorrows! What do you see? My friends, what you do see is the meeting place of the Master and His slave, whom the Master has elevated to the rank of friendship (*Wilayat*); now he sees through the eyes of his Master and works with the hands of his Master, God. Allah, only Allah, all Allah, nothing but Allah! Look at these two pictures. Imam Husain's army, what army it is, God's army and the hordes of Yazid's power. They also say their prayers, these hordes of Yazid also say their prayers, they also know the Book and understand of the Book as their passions make them understand it. They also derive their judgement from the Book, the judgement that has already been made by their fear and greed. And the *Fatwa* is that because Husain has revolted against the authority of the Khalifa therefore he is worthy of the worst punishment, therefore he has forfeited his life; this is what they have learnt from their book.

On the other side, Imam Husain on the last day i.e. on the 10th of Muharram is identifying himself: "Do you know who I am: is there anybody under this sky and on this earth who can say "I am the son of the Holy Prophet", is there anybody; there must be many of you who have seen me in the company of the Holy Prophet and seen the love that he bestowed upon me. Eversince I received the light , By Allah, never have I strayed one step from the path of rectitude'. Were they reminded of Husain's blood kinship with Muhammad? Through

this blood kinship could they see Husain's spiritual oneness with Muhammad - Yes, inspite of all professions and practices of Islam. And then the slave of God, the man of God, the friend of God, turns from men to his God: "If the *Deen* of God can be saved only through my sacrifice, here I stand in the presence of God, offering in love and gratefulness, all that I possess, the lives of me and my dear ones ready for all sufferings and humiliation, for all this belongs to God and God is always with me. The *"Deen"* of God must be saved. Where are the swords of the enemies? Come and get me. For I am ready." Now my friends our God is a very generous God, He values even the slightest gift which we offer to Him, the smallest gift which we offer Him, well we have seen what Husain offered but the value of it only God knows. And what God gave him in reward I do not know nor do you, we can only feel and we bow down our head. God is great! God is great!

THE CIRCLE OF FAITH

The seed of faith without which all our rituals, all our prayers are lifeless cannot prevent us from committing the most heinous crime. No protection against sins and crimes do these lifeless rituals and prayers provide. Today we are going to talk about the circle of faith which comprises of beliefs, morals and worldly conduct. Very briefly, the groundwork of faith or our root beliefs are symbolically explicated into appropriate religious rituals *Ibadat*, Branches of The Tree of Faith Then we are going to see how these beliefs reform our inner personality pattern *Akhlaq*, or morals (nature), and also transform our conduct in life and our dealings with men or *muamlat*. It is only when all these parts of circle of faith, when all these aspects of life, namely, our rituals or religious practices, our inner personality the *batin* or our inward nature and our outer conducts the *zahir* are integrated into one whole, that the *Deen* fulfils itself in the life of an individual.

1. The Unity of God or *Tauheed :*

Well, now you know as all of us know, that the starting point and the last goal, the first and the last of religion is belief in the unity of God or *Tauheed.* That is the Alpha and Omen or the first and the last. It is from here that religion starts and it is here in this belief that it culminates itself. Now by this belief in *Tauheed* or belief in the unity of God, what we mean is that God is *'maujood' ,'Huwal Maujood'* "the source of all beings". Some mystics will say "the only being". God is the goal towards which everything in the world, everything in the creation is tending and moving willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly. One who does not believe in God ; he is also moving towards God unknowingly or reluctantly through

the process of nature. One who does believe in God : he is also moving towards God deliberately, in fear and love. So, God is also *'Huwal Maqsood'*. He is the goal and the destiny or *'Muntaha'* the limit towards which we are tending. Everything is tending and everything is moving towards God. And only God is worthy of worship ; nothing else is worthy of worship. Everything that is in creation, glorifies God. We also glorify God and we also pray to God along with this universe. So, He is the source of our being. He is the goal and destiny towards which all creation is moving, and He alone is worthy of being worshipped. That is what we mean by the belief in the unity of God or *Tauheed*.

2. The day of Judgement or *Qayamat* :

After unity of God, there is another principle - belief in the 'Day of Judgement'. The implication of the belief in the day of judgement is that just as death comes out of life, life also comes out of death. That is, God has created life and death and in succession this chain goes on. Well, now we know a basic truth about this life. This brief span of life, as we know it is not the beginning nor the end of us. It is not our no-all and end-all. This is only a period of preparation specially provided to us. After this life, there is another life. The second implication of the belief is that we are responsible for our actions, and accountabe for everything we do, and everything which we neglect to do, or ignore to do, and for every thought that passes our mind. We are responsible for our will and thought and action. The third implication of this belief in the day of judgement is that we have to stand in the presence of God, a reintegration. Surely we belong to God and to Him do we return. We have to stand in the presence of God.

These are two very fundamental principles of faith. Belief in God and Belief in the Day of Judgement. God says 'whoever believes in God, i.e. in the unity of God, and His sovereignty, and in the day of judgement, he may be a Muslim, he may be a Sebian, he may be a Christian, he may be Jew, and he does good deeds ; he will get full reward for his deeds. That is, as it were, the universal foundation of religion. This is the common principle which you will find in all the religions of the world in one form or the other, viz. belief in God and belief in the judgement. In other words, there is a Power or a Being that governs the world and man is accountable for his deeds, and is responsible for what he becomes.

3. The Prophethood or *Nabuwat :*

The third basic principle is the principle of Prophethood, which means that God has in his dispensation, a divine dispensation of guidance. He has created things. Whatever he has created, and whomsoever He has created, He has provided proper guidance for it. The trees, the plants, the animals, the men; every provision has been made for their guidance, walking the path of their destiny, under the guidance of God. And as far as man is concerned, He has given him reason to understand and follow that guidance. On the one hand there is reason, and on the other hand there is this guidance provided by God through His Prophets. Thus man walks the path of his destiny. Thus the meaning of Prophethood is a divine scheme, a divine dispensation for the guidance of man. In fact, when one believes in God and in the Day of Judgement and in the Prophethood, then he enters the citadel of faith. Different religions are different transactions of Divine guidance and discipline and these traditions are not antagonistic to each other. All religions are divine in source. Prophets,

warners were sent to all peoples. We admit no difference between them. They are one tribe. All religions are unified. esentially and transcendentally ; unless they are polluted and distorted by men. Now my friends, when one believes in these three principles, one enters the citadel, and is quite safe and secure.

4. Justice or *Adl:*

After this, if a person also believes in the universal principle of justice or *Adl*, then we gain an insight into the working of the universe and the relationship between God and man also. We know that God has set up the balance, the balance of justice, where everything is in order, in its due place, in proper measure and in balance with everything else. By saying that God is just, what we mean is that in the first place, He is not an arbritrary despot, working on His whims. Everything has the law of its being and its appointed course, and all things are in order. And secondly we mean that in his dealings with his creatures, God is not a tyrant but All-wise, All-merciful. Well this is what we mean when we say that God is just. So, justice is the universal law, framed by God. Justice is the balance of creation. If that balance is slightly disturbed, everything will become topsy turvey;everything will be destroyed. Justice is that power, or that virtue, which holds earth and heavens together. And so man, too, must follow justice in all his dealings with men. Sometimes an objection is raised, and it is that, there is another attribute of God, that is *'Rehmat'*. God is *Rehman*, *Rahim*. Is not there a conflict between *'Adl'* and *'Rehmat'* or between the justice and mercy of God ? Well, this objection is due to a limited vision. There cannot be any antagonism between justice and mercy. We may put it like this. Mercy is the soul, or mercy shows itself in the form of

justice. Justice without mercy is not justice, it is vengeance. In the same way mercy without justice, is simply sentimentality. It stands on no foundation. Justice is the foundation on which mercy stands, or *adl* is the foundation on which *rehmat* stands. Without this foundation of justice, there is no *rehmat*, or mercy, or no compassion. We so often deceive ourselves on this issue. To be kind to others is easy; to be just to others is very difficult. We cannot comfort others unless we are just to them. Just by throwing a slice to a man in need, we think that we are being merciful or we are being compassionate. We in fact have to look to the foundation of the society. Are we justly placed in society ? Look at the one who gives and the one who is forced to beg. That is why we emphasize justice, since without justice, there is no mercy. That's the foundation, that is the law, the universal law. That is the law of God and the law of the universe and the law of man. That is the law which holds heavens and earth together and that is the law which is responsible for the stability of human society also. All the upheavels or the revolutions in our society are in fact man's attempt to define justice in changing circumstances. What should be the just basis of human relations in changed circumstances, in a particular situation? When there is no justice, there is chaos. Revolution is man's attempt, however imperfect or defective or I may say, even blind, it may be to seek the balance of justice. Why this thirst for justice is there in the soul of man, I don't know. I can only say, that man is made that way. The thirst for justice is put in him. Whatever be the condition, or the situation, man is always thirsting for justice. He may not be able to define justice, or he may not be able to say in what justice lies in a particular situation, but a thirst for justice is there. So, we may say that it is not only the law of human relations, it is also the law of human nature, embedded deep in us.

5. Imamat:

Closely allied to the Divine law of justice is the Divine law of Divine mercy whose noblest manifestation is the appearance of Prophets and attainment of Imams. In fact this principle of justice and mercy is a permanent feature in creation, as permanent and as fundamental as God's dispensation for the sustenance of human life. This dispensation of guidance cannot stop, nor can it break. If it breaks, the whole world will go to pieces, just as it would if that divine dispensation of sustenance of human life were to stop, ever so slightly. The principle of Imamat is an extension of Prophetic guidance. The Prophetic office might come to an end, as it has indeed come to an end, but Prophetic guidance, that divine guidance, can not come to an end. The world cannot be devoid of it. This is the nature of this divine guidance. We know how it is a permanent feature of creation; how it is a part of God's plan, part of God's blessings, God's mercy. It is God's mercy that He does not leave us without this guidance. The Prophet and after him the Imam is the symbol and substance of that guidance, of that divine guidance, of which this world cannot be devoid.

The prescribed forms of prayers: *Salaat, Zakat*

So now, this is our ground work, the principal ground work, on which our religion stands. These are the principles. Now we come to the second part of our religion, when we say there are prayers, different forms of prayers ritual prayers. Then there is *'Akhlaq'* i.e. the inner patern of man, the moral man, and then there is this world, the world of *'muaamlat'* the world of human relations. We can say it like this. It starts with belief, now this belief shows itself, in some ritualistic

form of prayer. These are the fundamental beliefs, the root principles of faith. All the prescribed forms of prayers, be it the *Salaat* or *Zakat,* or *Hajj* or fasting; all of them are, in the first place, a symbolic expression or affirmation of these beliefs in the presence of God. In the second place, by the invocation of God's Grace, these beliefs must be interiorised. The ritual forms of prayers must work to shape our *'Akhlaq'*, our moral self, the inner pattern of our personality. And lastly this *'Akhlaq'* must show in our dealings with men, in our *Muamlaat.* If there is no impact of our prayers on the self, and if there is no impact on the world, we say that our prayers have been defective, faulty. Such is the indication of the success, of the fulfilment of our prayers.

Salaat:

We believe, in the unity and sovereignty of God. He alone is worthy of being worshipped. He is our God, our all. Let us consider our first and foremost ritual prayer, the *salaat.* The form, the ritualitic prayer which has been laid down for us, is the symbol of this truth. In *Salaat*, symbolically it is as if we are standing before our Master, opening out to him our innermost self, presenting to him our record, and seeking guidance from Him. Mind you my friends, it's only when we stand in the presence of God that we seek guidance. This is the difference between the worship of God and the worship of an idol. An idol worshiper does not go to his idol in order to seek guidance; he wants some protection, because he fears the world For him, this world is not a world of law but it is all a matter of chance. He wants that somehow he may appease the anger of god, or win his favour, in order to fare better in this world

of chance. This is the difference between worship of God and worship of an idol. In worshiping God we stand in the presence of God and we seek His guidance. That is, we give an account of ourselves, and then we seek His guidance. After that, we go to look after the things of the world, the work of our world. So *Salaat* is a symbol, a symbolic act which affirms and deepens our beliefs. And its first effect is on our own self, on our own soul, and what are those effects? They are establishing a tie between God the creater and His creature. To have an idea as to what impact this prayer or *salaat* has on our soul or should have on our soul and on ourselves, the holy book says, that your *salaat* protects you from *munkar* and *fahasha* i.e. from shameful deeds, from lewdness and from anti-social deeds, from evils. Now my friends, if our prayers, our *salaat* has no such effect on us, then we have to conclude that our *salaat* has been faulty. It has not been accepted by God. It has been thrown back on us. Somebody once asked Imam Jafer Sadiq Alaih Salaam, "O! Master, is it a fact I want verification from you. Has the Holy Prophet said that if your salaat is accepted then all your deeds will be approved." The Imam confirmed it. He said yes. That is a true saying of the Holy Prophet. Then he says "O! Master, is there any way for us to know whether our *salaat* has been accepted, approved or has not been approved but rejected by God" On this, the Imam smiled and said that the indication of this lies in the Holy Book itself. For does not the Holy Book say that your *salaat* protects you from *Fahasha* and *Munkar.* If your *salaat* protects you from *Fahasha* and *Munkar* then it means it has been accepted by God and if it does not save you from *Fahasha* and *Munkar* i.e. if you say your prayers and at the same time commit acts of lewdness, and anti-social acts those that are harmful to others, then inspite of your saying your prayers five times a day, it means your *salaat* has been

thrown away. It means your *salaat* has been rejected. So the first impact of salaat is that we become righteous persons. We become protected from lewdness, from *Fahasha*, from *Munkar*, from those things and those acts, which are disapproved. The second effect on us of *salaat* is that we lay down our forehead on the ground, in all humility. It means we reduce ourselves to zero before God. We imbibe the spirit of humility in us, absolute humility, as if we are nothing. And along with that we are also filled with the sense of self-respect, i e. we worship none and nothing but God, we bow our head before none else but God. We stand on the top of the ladder of creation, and our head cannot bow before any other thing except God. That will be abomination, that will be a degradation, that will be an insult to our humanity. So, we imbibe true humility out of which grows true self respect. We know ourselves, and we become conscious of our dignity, and these two things go together. The man who has cultivated the spirit of humility in him, only he knows the dignity of his own self. And that man who knows the dignity of his own self, he is filled with the true spirit of humility. So, that is the formative influence, the formative impact, of *As-salaat*. This makes us free from fear or despondency, even from fear of freedom. Then we do not fear failure, because we stand in the presence of God. We do not fear death, because death is also going back to our God or a return to our God. Hence, if this close companionship has been cultured, and if we stand in the presence of God, then there is no fear. We have no fear of defeat, since we have done our duty, whatever results that deed or that action bears, that is to be looked after by God. That's none of our business, since we have already done our duty. That's all that was expected of us, so there is no fear, and there is no reason to be despondent. One who believes in God never becomes despondent, because with God is all hope and trust. A man of

God feels no sense of anxiety, no sense of alienation or loneliness. He is living in God's world. This world is a kin to him. This world has also been created by God. He is a part of this creation, just as this creation, that's a part of Him. He is the eye of this creation. This is the relation between micro-cosm and macro-cosm. He is moving towards harmony and peace, peace with ourselves, peace with the world and peace with our God. That's the meaning of *Nafse Mutmaeena*, moving towards that *Nafse Mutmaeenna*. The man without God is stranger to his own self. Look at the agony of the man of God and the man without God. The agony of the latter is the agony of a man lost in utter wilderness, the agony of the former is the agony of the lover, the agony of separation from the Beloved. We are separated from our source, separated from our God, and we are restless to be re-integrated with our God. That is the agony of love, or the agony of *'feraq'* or separation.

Now, that we stand in the presence of God, all our desires and our values, have become sublimated. It is only now that we have become capable of loving and serving man. It is not for everybody to love or serve man. One has to enable onself. A man qualifies to love and serve the other man, only when he is no longer the slave of his desires. A man who is too much involved with himself, cannot love others, cannot serve others. So that is the impact of faith in God on us. If this impact is not there, or if that impact is not building upon us, it is the indicator, that our *salaat*, does not have the right spirit, or it is faulty somewhere.

Lastly, the impact of our faith shows or ought to show in our dealing with the world. Since we believe in God, we also believe in the solidarity of human family. True humanism is and must be God centred. For humanism without God, life of a

man is the life of one individual and must be valued as such. For God centred humanism, life of a man has infinite value. Humanism without God can not understand the meaning of the Quranic verse which says that if you have taken the life of one man without any justification it is as if you have murdered all humanity. We respect man as such. We respect him for what he is. However low he may have fallen, he holds the spark of divinity, the promise of goodness. But we do not level down good and bad to one surface. We honour the good man, the man of *Taqwa* for his goodness, for his *Taqwa*. We honour him for what he has become. Honour those, who are worthy of honour.

In the same way, there is freedom; freedom from the worship of all idols along with adopting at the same time the one discipline of God in which alone lies true freedom. We have not only demolished the external idols, the idols of wealth and the idols of power; we have also demolished those idols which we carry within ourselves, the idols of ambition, appetite, our lust, our wrath. We demolish those idols also. Well, my friends that is the impact of the faith in God, on society, on the environment. Now we can see how this circle is completed. It started with faith, it shows itself in some form, in some symbolic form of ritualistic prayers, then it has its impact upon ourselves, and it has its impact on the surroundings, on the environments.

ZAKAT :

In the same way, it applies to *Zakat* : *Zakat* means that we don't worship money, or wealth. On the other hand we believe that this wealth, if it has any justification, if it has any aim, it is for the welfare of men. It has to be spent . God has enabled us to produce wealth. It is God's bounty. Let it not be polluted

by exploitation, by following forbidden ways. The value of wealth lies in spending it, spending for the welfare of man After that our mind, our soul, our self, become clean, clean of this abomination of greed, the worship of money. Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him) says that you cannot worship God and Mammon at the same time. Our Holy Book points out to us that we have only one heart. One heart means only one love. As for the impact on society it has been said that the sign of a man who is following the path of *Takwa,* or the discipline of *Takwa* is that he spends his wealth, whatever he has, in the way of God, in the way of *'Infaq'. Infaq 'fee sabil lillah'* is the sign of every *Muttaqi.* Wealth must circulate, and must keep on circulating, just as blood circulates in the human body. All the good things of this life are not the aim and object of life. They are means of life, or *'Mata-e-Hayat';* they are not *'Maqsad-e-Hayat'* or aim of life. If you make them *Maqsad-e-Hayat* that means perishing, or destruction. So, that is the meaning of *Zakat. Zakat* is relation between man and man. *Salaat* is relation between man and God and the two go together. So in this way *Zakat* also starts with some belief. The prescribed sum that you pay, the minimum that you must pay is only a token, or only a symbol. It is not that if you have paid some tax then you have become free of all your responsibilities. *Zakat* is an attitude towards wealth, an attitude towards welfare of man, knowing the right place of wealth, where it is to be spent. *Zakat* and *Tazkiya* spring from the same root. *Zakat* is purifying, cleansing of all impurities and invoking God's blessings and bounty. Well, my friends in this way, if you take all the different ritualistic prayers, you will find that this circle of faith is complete, starting in faith, and ending with impact on self and society. If it makes no impact on self and society, then it means we are not performing these ritualistic prayers as they ought to be done. That means we are doing it in a me-

chanical way, in a lifeless way.

Now I would just refer to a religious practice of ours and ask you to think about it. When we say our *ziarat*, we stand before Imam Husain Alaih Salaam, salute him and we say, "we bear witness, O! Imam, we bear witness, *'Qad Akamtus Salaat'* , *'Qad Atiataz Zakat'*, that you established prayers, and you performed Zakat. What do we mean by all that. Do we mean that Imam Husain used to perform his prayers five times a day, or he used to give that token, *Zakat* money every year? What is the meaning of *salaat* and *zakat*, Is it not an act of impudence, a blasphemy, a sinful degradation of the sublime station of Imamat to affirm this and most solemnly too, to affirm that Imam Husain said prayers five times a day what is the minimum requisite without which one cannot even be a Muslim. No, we use these terms in their widest and fullest and deepest significance. This was also discovered through the action of Imam Husain. The meaning of *Kalima*, or the word was revealed. His *salaat* established the sovreignty of the one God against the sovreignty of wordly tyrants. His *salaat* was the golden chain between earth and heavens, between man and God which even the sword of the murderer could not severe. This is the power of *Salaat*. The power of *Salaat* is to demolish the very foundation of the citadel of *Batil*, however imposing it may be, however grand it may be, and to establish the foundation of *Haq*, Truth. From untruth to Truth, from darkness to light, from death to life, or life out of death; that is *Salaat*.

And what is the *Ita-e-Zakat* ? It is giving everything in the way of God, for the service of man. Just think; what was it that Imam Husain did not give in the way of God? It has been said in the Quran that you cannot attain to any degree of

righteousness unless you spend in the way of God; all that is most prescious to you, all that you love most. Just think; what were those things, which Imam Husain loved most and which he gave in the way of God? Was it the life of his friends, of his relatives, of his sons, of his brothers, I don't know what, because the things which he sacrificed were so precious to him. I cannot say what was more precious than the other. I cannot say whether the life of his son, Ali Akbar, was more precious, or that *chadar* which covered the sacred head of his sister. I can't say that; but I do know one thing, that all that he loved, and all that he held precious, he gave away in the way of God, for the service of mankind. And from this world, he didn't even care to take a few yards of his shrout. He didn't even care to take that. Then we say *Qadakamtus Salaat, Qadatiataz Zakat.* Now we know the meaning of *Qayam-e-Salaat*, and *Itai Zakat.*

THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY

I was pointing out some of the fallacies, very recent fallacies, in our approach to the understanding of Islam, for instance, the reduction of Islam to an ideology. The other fallacy was to equate Islam with the sum of certain systems, like economic system, and political system and social system and all that. I criticise these fallacies on good grounds. For one, the ideologies always refer to somebody or to some group of persons, or to some school of thought. It is pragmatic, directed to some practical end. Now how are we going to refer the ideology of Islam. To whom shall we refer the ideology of Islam. To God? But from God comes the truth, not an ideology. Secondly, as far as systems are concerned, you know that the systems change from time to time, as they must change, because of historical reasons, and the technological development. Hence on account of so many factors which I need not count, these systems change. As for Quran, it gives us permanent values, rooted in the nature of man. These are the two categories of reality, i.e. permanent values and changing situations, and it is the function of knowledge, of *Hikmat*, wisdom, to apply those permanent values, to changing situations. My friends, this is the function of *Ijtehad*, of knowledge and wisdom, of *Ilm-e-Kitaab* and *Hikmat*, namely applying permanent values to changing situations.

The Holy Book is God's guidance for man. Man lives in society. Certainly, these two important realities are discussed there. One is the reality of the individual, and the other is the reality of the society. The two are out there and they are treated together because they act and react upon one another. There is a natural relationship between individual and society. The natural relationship is that individual cannot sur-

vive without living in society, and the society is composed of all individuals, but it is more than that. There is also a moral relationship between individual and society. The individual cannot perfect himself by living alone, by cutting himself off from society. It is only in society that he can fulfil himself and develop his talents, the gifts which God has bestowed on him. And as far as society is concerned, well, society is, what it is, because individuals have made it so. The criterian of a good individual is, the contribution he makes to the welfare of society, and the criterion of the excellence of society is the opportunities that it provides to the individual for his self-development, and self-culture. So these two, i.e. the individual and the society, they go together. The Quran deals with both these realities and the necessary, essential relationship between the two. As far as the individual is concerned, well, it is pointed out that the criterion of excellence is *Takwa*, and this word has comprehensive meanings in the Holy Book. *Takwa* is not a particular virtue, rather, that is an attitude, a culture, a spirit, which enters into the thought, and will and action of man, in every rite that he performs. *Takwa* is the life of our prayer. Our life is just like a journey, but the valley in which we are travelling, is full of so many things, full of thorns and branches. There are very seductive diversions also, very tempting sidelines, luring us away from the straight path. There are our sufferings and sorrows which crush all spirit out of the traveller; so many tests and tribulations have to be faced. *Takwa* means picking our ways through these thorns and branches, obstacles and boulders, picking our way through a difficult terrain, resisting the temptations to be on the straight path and walk the primrose path of dalliance and not minding those sufferings or sorrows that befall on the way and bearing them with patience. *Takwa* is our commitment to the path that we have chosen to follow. *Takwa* is, heedfulness,

i.e. minding every step, a continuous monitoring of whether we have taken the right step or the wrong step. *Takwa* is awareness and enlightenment, just to keep a watch on ourselves. *Takwa* is seeking God's assistance at every step. The man who follows the path of *Takwa* is quite conscious of human weaknesses, those weaknesses to which human flesh is heir. So, he seeks divine guidance and he fears transgression. He knows that by God's protection we are served and through God's grace we become good. So, this is the path of *Takwa*, i e commitment to the path, awareness and heedfulness. Then in all humility seeking the divine assistance, and fearing transgression, that is going beyond the limits, or going off the path That is *Takwa;* that is the criterian of excellence for the individual.

And about excellence in society, which in Islam is called *Millat.* The Islamic *millat* is not based on place, or on blood. It is based on shared right faith and right action, *Aqeeda* and *Amal,* or *Iman* and *Amal-e-Swaleh,* living the principle of justice and love and working together for the cause of righteousness. The secret of unity is justice. If there is no justice, in a particular society, or *millat*, don't think of unity in that *millat.* If there is no justice, it means there is a class of exploited. And the exploiters and the exploited do not belong to the same nation, or the same *millat.* They belong to different *millat.* So, unity and justice go hand-in-hand. And this is also the functions of the *Imam*, namely, to maintain the unity, and to see that unity is based on justice. Well, very breifly, you allow me a brief digression on this theme of justice and unity. If Hazrat Ali maintained silence over his right during the early Khilafat; that was in the interest of the unity of the *millat.* And when he himself became the worldly ruler he fought the wars that he had to in order to reinforce justice, When Imam-

Hasan renounced worldly rule, well, that was in the interest of the unity of the *millat*. And when Imam Husain fought this *jehad* against Yazid, that was in order to establish justice. Hence a balance between these two, i.e. unity and justice is to be maintained, otherwise unity has no moral significance. The unity which is not based on justice is a form of tyranny or fear. Thus *Takwa* is the excellence in individual and unity and justice are the basic excellence in society.

Let me now briefly explain what righteousness is according to the teaching of the Holy Book. We have been told that righteousness is not that you turn your face to the east or to the west. This means that righteousness does not consist, in performing the prescribed rituals mechanically.

Righteousness is the spirit, the soul, in what spirit, a particular action, or a particular ritual is being performed. The turning of our face to the east or west, are *'Manasik'*. These are just the forms of discipline, in the different traditions. From the Manasik and of course through it, we have to pass on to the spirit of religion. Righteousness, we are further taught, is that you believe in God, and you believe in the Last Day. This is the ground work of belief which we were discussing yesterday, belief in God and in the Last Day, and that we called *'Deen-e-Qayyim'* the perennial, the universal *Deen*. That is the basis, or the factor which is common to all the religions of the world, that is belief in God and in the Last Day. Then we are asked to believe in the angels of God, and in the books of God, and in the Prophets of God, which means that God's Dispensation and Guidance are ever at work. God has not left us without direction. This scheme of God, or this divine plan of guidance, is working all the time. The coming of prophets is not an accident The appearance or the advent of the Prophets, is a

part of the divine plan. The Angels, and Books, and the Prophets, are a golden chain between the earth and the heav en. It is through this chain that God's mercy in the form of man's physical and spiritual sustenance descends from heavens, it is through this chain that man can ascend to his goal, his Lord After this belief, next condition is, that we spend what God has given us, for the sake of God, for the love of God. And God has named those people who have a rightful share in our wealth. These are our nearest of kin. that is emphasised again and again because in the teaching of Islam great emphasis is laid on the family. It is on the family that the *millat* depends, if you want to see what a *millat* is like, you have to see to the homes. The *millat* or the society is as good or as bad as the homes of which it is composed of. So after the nearest of kin, spend your money on orphans. An orphan means one who has no patrons or nobody to look after him. That is humanity in its nakedness, humanity with all its purity; absolute, unqualified and stark & humanity. That is what the orphans represent. So, doing good to the orphans, i.e. someone who has no patron, is to respect humanity. That is the meaning of the respect for man. So, spend your money, your wealth on orphans. After orphans, spend your money on *'Masakeen'*. A *Miskeen* means one who has come to a standstill in the career of his life. There is no movement in his life, he can't go one step forward; he is helpless. So, just help him stand on his feet and move onwards. *Miskeen* is from the same word as *Sukoon*, that is, he is rendered helpless, and then come *Ibnus-Sabil* which means, the son of the pathway, or the son of the road, the wanderer, the traveller, one who has no home, or is very far from home. Among people there were those who are well settled in homes *(the sahib-al-bait)* and there are those who are unsettled, homeless, sons of the road *(the ibn-as-Sabil)*. So many people who are unsettled; so,

spend your wealth, God says, in order to settle those people who are homeless.

Today, in our world, you know, how many millions of people are unsettled, living under God's sky, without any place which they can call home. So, settle them in homes, because the proper, natural way of human habitation is living in homes, not in wilderness. Then you spend your wealth on helping those who ask for your help and lastly those who are in bondage to release them from the difficulties into which they are trapped.

So far we have learnt that righteousness is that you believe in God, Last Day, in the Prophets, and the Books and angels. And righteousness is that you spend your money on the nearest of kin, on the orphans, and on the helpless, on those who have no home or are very far from home, on those who ask for it and on those who are in bondage. The explication of righteousness continues. And righteousness is that you establish prayers, and institute *zakat*. we shall discuss the meaning of establishing prayers, and instituting *zakat* after some time. And then the next condition that has been laid down is that we maintain, we keep, we follow those promises and contracts which we have made. Now this again has very deep and comprehensive meanings. My friends, you have a certain station, with reference to your family, your society, your country, and humanity. To every station, some obligations ae attached. Some duties are attached. These duties and obligations, are the promises which you have made. This is expected of you, and you have to fulfil all those conditions or those contracts or those promises. As a householder, as a man belonging to a particular society, to a particular business or profession, and as a man, as a member of this vast family of man, you have to

perform your duties. We have been told that the condition of righteousness is that you keep firm, be patient and persevere. During all afflications, in the hour of panic, in suffering, in adversity, you have to be patient, you have to be forebearing, you have to persever. God says that such men are truthful, and such men are God-fearing, *Takwa and Sidq*. The path of the righteous man has been clearly chalked out. The path of the truthful men, of God fearing men in society, is respecting and honouring all their promises and contracts, doing what belongs to their stations, their stations as private individuals. and as public individuals. And whenever they encounter hours of crisis, then they stand firm and face it. They do not despair in the hour of adversity, and they do not become vain and proud, in the hour of prosperity. Man of God knows that prosperity and adversity, are two conditions, which are passing and they have to stand firm, along the path of their duty. That has been clearly pointed out to us.

And now I would try to discuss the meaning of establishing prayers and instituting *Zakat*. Why has our *millat* been called into existence. God says that this *millat* has been called into existence, in order to establish prayers, *As-Salaat*. As we were discussing the other day, the end result of establishing prayer is a total formation of a society. For a society in which *As-Salaat* has been established is not a society, with privileges and patronages; this is an egalitarian society, a society based on justice, and on equity. This is the society in which the idols of wealth and power are not worshipped. This is the society where man stands as man and where man is respected. It is only when our society is free from all these privileges and inequalities and from all these patronages, and from this worship of wealth, and this worship of power, that we, properly speaking can announce from the tower of the mosque *'Allah-*

o-Akbar'. But if the ultimate value of our life is wealth, or if the ultimate value of our life is power, and if we bow before these idols of wealth and power, then it does not lie in our mouth to announce *Allah-o-Akbar*. It is just deluding ourselves, because God cannot be with us. So my friends, establishing *As-salaat*, would mean bringing about the revolution in a society. A revolution in society, is not brought about by passing a government edict that every one shall say the five prayers a day and shall be punished if he fails to do so. In the same way the second purpose why this *millat* has been called into existence is *'Ita-ez-Zakat'*. My friends *Zakat* is not a tax which is collected by the governments. The teaching of every Prophet was *Salaat* and *Zakat*, even though as you know, there were not many Prophets who were wordly rulers also. *Zakat* represents a certain attitude, attitude towards man and towards wealth, towards welfare of man *Infaq and iktinaz* are opposite of each other. *Infaq fee sabil Illah, i.e.* giving, investing in the way of God, all that God has given you. Well, that is the sign of a *momin*. *Iktinaz*, i.e. hoarding money, that is the sign of a *Kafir*. We have been told that all these things, which are called the good things of life or the desireable things of life; they are not the aim or object of life. These are only the means of life and please don't forget that the means lead to some end. Well, don't confuse ends and means. They are not the end or aim of life. They are just the means, or *Mataa-e-Hayat* not the aim or *Maqsad-e-Hayat*. And we have been told that wealth should not accumulate just in one quarter but it should flow freely just as blood flows free in human body, and every limb derives its power, a sort of parable from that flow of blood That is what we have been told. I give you just one simple example. It is like this. Suppose there are two brothers or a community of two brothers. One brother has an edge over the other in respect of knowledge, or money,

or power, or in all the three respects. Now he can use this superiority in two ways. One way is, that on account of this superiority he can enslave his brother, and keep him as his slave. In other words, he can exploit his brother, because he has wealth, and power, and has knowledge, or he can use this superiority, this edge, in other way, i.e. he can help his brother, stand up shoulder to shoulder with him. Now the teaching of Islam, is that the society in which one brother uses his superiority, in order to exploit his weaker brother, is a cursed society. With all its wealth or power or knowledge or all of them, it is a weak society a cursed society. As for the other society where two brothers are standing shoulder to shoulder they may not have much power, but that is a blessed society, free and powerful. That society cannot be enslaved. Well, this in simple words, is the teaching of Islam. This is the purpose for which, this society has been called into being.

Another purpose which has been pointed out is enjoining the *maruf* and forbidding the *munkar*. *Maruf* comprehends all good things, approved actions and worthy ends. The worthy ends are in enjoining things that are approved, or which are desireable. The worthy objects in life are acquiring knowledge and wisdom, cultivating the quality of heedfulness in conduct and acting in just and considerate manner. These worthy ends are according to the teachings of Islam. *Munkar* are those things which are evil and the basic and fundamental evil things, according to the teaching of Islam are two, just two, namely, *Jehl* and *Zulm*. 'Jehl' is heedlessness or wilful rejection of reason ; *'Zulm'* is transgression of proper limits in conduct. These are the two basic evils, and it is from them that all the evils in the world flow, either from heedlessness or transgression. *Jehl* is the evil of perception. *Zulm*, is the evil of action. So, these are the two basic evils. Thus estab-

lishing *As-salaat*, instituting *Az-zakat*, and enjoining *Ma'roof* and forbidding *Munkar* are the reason d'etre of the founding of the Islamic *millat*.

My friends in order to close my talk this evening, I only like to recite to you, some of the extracts from the will and testament which Imam Husain at the time of his departure from Madina bequethed to his brother, Muhammad-e-Hanafia. This was at the time that Imam Husain was about to leave Madina, when he called his brother, Muhammad-e-Hanafia. In his will and testament, first he bears witness to the sovereignty and the unity of God and to the Prophetic Ministry of Muhammad *Rasool Lillah*. S.A. Then he affirms his belief in the last judgement where everybody will get the reward or the recompense for the actions that he does, and then he says 'My brother, I am leaving Madina, not seeking power and self, not seeking power for my self, not seeking wealth, or self aggrandizement. I am not leaving Madina for these things, nor am I leaving Madina in order to create turbulance or commotions. I am leaving Madina for the sake of good of the *Millat*. And I have adopted willingly for myself this exile and banishment from my own home and bearth, along with all my relatives, my women and children. I have done that in order to help and support the cause of righteousness". In every society, there are some people who may be called the righteous people, those who enjoin good, and forbid evil, i.e. those who oppose all forms of tyranny. Now if you keep silent, your are making them weak, but if you add your voice to that protest, you are strengthening them. First imagine, by raising your voice against evil and tyranny, particularly established evil and tyranny, you are joining your voice to the voice of Imam Husain. Supporting the righteous, and fulfilling the obligation, of enjoining good and forbidding evil, were the objects of his jour-

ney which Imam Husain himself pointed out Then his testament proceeds on, "and those people if they listen to truth, then truth belongs to God. He is most worthy of it. But if they do not listen to me, I shall patiently wait for the judgement of God, for God is the best of judges. Further on, he says, "My brother Muhammad-e-Hanafia this is my advise to you also; all support and help comes from God, our only hope and trust lies in God, and thus I turn to God, 'Well, these are some of the sentences from his will and testament, and now we say, our Lord, our Master, we bear witness, that you performed the duty of *Amr bil ma'roof and Nahianil Munkar*. Yesterday in my talk, we witnessed to the fact that it was Imam Husain who performed the duty of establishing *As-Salaat*, and of instituting *Az-Zakat*, as it had never been done. Moreover, we bear witness in our Ziarat, that he performed his duty of *"Amr Bil Ma'roof and Nahianil Munkar"*, which is an obligation on every believing man and on every believing woman, and in Karbala we have an example to follow it as the Imam did. You look to the careers and the lives of the Imams and you find them exercising this duty, this duty of *Amr Bil Ma'roof and Nahianil Munkar* in the most effective way, under the circumstances, which they had to face. So, we bear witness to that. O ! Imam, you have been performing this exercise, this duty, everyday of your life whether it was writing those letters to Muawiya or it was addressing the hordes of Yazid, or it was your very journey from Madina to Karbala. All these are acts of *Amr Bil Ma'roof and Nahinal Munkar*, the likes of which have never been performed.

At this moment I think of just some more words of the Imam. at his last moment. The Imam stands alone, on the battlefield of Karbala. All his friends, his relatives have died, his brothers and his son have been murdered. He is left alone,

and at that point he addresses the hordes or Yazid, and he says "You have murdered my brother, You have murdered my son, you have murdered my relatives, my friends, all of them. I now stand alone, but I warn you, don't try to murder me. You think that shedding my blood, is something very light. I tell you it is something very serious. It is something very grave". Now my friends, just contemplate for a while. In that situation of life, no one, much less Imam Husain, would like to live even for a single moment anymore. But Husain is the Imam even if some of his people have repudiated him. How his heart grieves over those who have gone astray. How anxious is he to redeem those who have been seduced by the devil. Friends ! I have finished. I close this talk by leaving one thought with you to revolve in your mind. Did you see how grieved the Imam was over the misdeeds of even those who had repudiated him. We are believers in our Imams. We claim to follow them. We invoke their names day and night. We are known by them, Shia Imamia. Will we not be causing pain to out Imams if we commit some shameful act. This is the thought which I leave with you to ponder. And I pray that though we may not be worthy of the Imams, may God save us from doing things that would bring shame to the life tradition of Imamat to which we profess to belong.

THE RISE & FALL OF NATIONS

Now we are going to turn to the very important theme which has been dealt with in great details in the Holy Book; perhaps one of the themes which has been discussed, and dealt with in greatest details. The theme is the rise of nations, of people, their rise to place of power and dominance ;then their fall and decline, and their being supplanted by some other group. Well, that is the theme which has been dealt in great details and repeatedly in the Holy Book. We shall do well to apply the Quranic insights and lessons in understanding the rise of the Muslim empire and its effect on the habits, on the views, on the values of the people. Well, this theme is very germane to the topic which we have before us. It will give us some insight into the event of Karbala.

The historical phenomenon of the rise of a nation to power and dominance, is called in the Holy Book, as *Ayyam,* or "Days". God says, "these are the days which we rotate among men" Today it is one nation's day; tomorrow it is another nation's day. Civilisations rise, dominate, decay and are replaced by other civilisations. If we would not have one group supplanted by another group, then *fasaad* would have become rampant in the world. *fasaad* may be translated as corruption; corruption in different walks of life; corruption would have become rampant on the earth, but God is very merciful to His creatures. We are told that it is God's mercy that one group when it declines and loses its vigour and meaning and direction and starts spreading corruption in the world, must be supplanted by another group. At another place we are told that had it not been so, had this change not been brought about, then the houses of worship, the mosques and the churches would have been abolished, abandoned by

them. Instead of worshipping God, people would become worshippers of power, worshiers of wealth, worshippers of rulers, and would groan under tyranny in the darkness of despair without hope of deliverance. God says that it's Our mercy; Our mercy to mankind, that when nations which transgress, and which to their own people turn tyrants, God uproots them. That is the way to sustain and to deliver them from tyranny, and to nourish the people. In this uprooting of the tyrants, there is opportunity for the weak and the oppressed. That, it seems, is the teaching of the Quran.

God gives us illustrations of the people of those civilisations in which *fasaad* had become rampant. There is mention of the tribe of *Ad,* the tribe of *Thamood,* and Pharaoh, in *Sura-Al fajr* , or the chapter "Daybreak". In this chapter, note how *"fasaad"* is defined. By *fasaad,* we generally mean riots, insurrections, rebellions, bloodshed here, bloodshed there, protests and processions. That is *fasaad* for us, but it's not so in the Holy Book. In these three instances, there is absolutely no mention of riots or rebellions. The Holy Book dwells upon the glorious splendour of these civilisations, on their architectural monuments, on their skill; the like of *Ad* there existed no other people; the *Thamood* who could build rock-hewn palaces, and pharaoh with all his horses, and armies. In short, what is emphasised here is their skill, their greatness, their affluence, their architectural monuments, their armies and forces. God says, that these people, these nations, had transgressed, and filled God's land with corruptions, and therefore they met dire chastisement from God.

What is, then, the definition of *fasaad.* What constites *fasaad.* What are the symptoms of *fasaad* ? My friends, these riots, and these outbreaks and all these rebellions and insur-

rections, these are not *fasaad*. These are the symptoms and consequences of *fasaad*. Well this disease of *fasaad* lies deep in the constitution, and conduct of the corrupt people. How is the diagnosis of this disease done ? God points out that in the first place, there is no respect for man as such; men are lost in big organisations, in the intricate maze of status and interests. In a very meaningful way, the Holy Book says, *"the yateem* (orphan) is not respected in your society". As I was explaining the other day, that *Yateem* (the orphan) typefies humanity in its purity, one who has no patron,no one to own any relation with him. In corrupt societies, man is known by his status, by his relations and connectins, by his birth or wealth or position in big organisations. Man as man, as God's creation, as His Trust, has no value. His value lies only in as far as he is feared or exploited. God has been banished from the land which is all occupied by big organisatins. In the second place, there are people, who are in a state of helplessness. *Miskeen,* the immobile, helpless, and those people are stuck up, in a state of distress and destitution. And yet nobody takes care of them. For it is a big empire and everybody is looking up, their chin upthrust, with little attention to spare for those who are groaning in the dust. A big empire like those just cited is like a pyramid which stands on so many poor crushed millions. Those *miskeen* lie there, crushed under the structure and splendour and glory, and nobody thinks of that. This state is a cause of decay and decline. Intelligent nations do not allow poverty to go so deep, or spread so wide. In the third place, they forget that God is the sovereign of all the lands, this earth and heavens, this is the inheritance of God, and He has fixed the rights of everybody in it according to Law. Yet there are people who would usurp not only the rights of others but even the dominion and sovereignty of God. Every usurper displays his illgotten affluence as the fa-

vour bestowed upon him by God. Every tyrant in order to justify his usurpation, cites the Quranic verse which means that God is the Lord of lords, the sovereign of sovereigns and He gives authority *(mulk)* to whomever He wants, and He takes away (authority)*mulk* from whomever He wants. In His hands is all that is good and He is powerful over everything. The tyrant forgets that this world is a place of test and trial, that genuine authority and honour comes through obedience to Him, and His Majesty can bear with usurpers and tyrants. even the satan himself for nothing and nobody can escape Him. In the third place, in the corrupt civilizations, you will find the leaders tending to become gods; big gods, small gods, not even a heirarchy of gods as it were, but scrambling crew of gods and the ultimate values of their lives, is assuming wealth, and indulging in the pleasures of the flesh. Well that is their ultimate value, their idea of pleasure, their idea of ultimate falicity, it is amassing wealth; as much wealth as they can and indulging in these pleasure. This banishing of God, abolition of man, crushing of the downtrodden, demolition of law and justice, frantic pursuit of power and pelf are the syndrome of corruption. Turmoil or turbulance is not corruption; it is the consequence of corruption. And if no protest is made, nothing is done to enjoing good and prohibit evil, it is worse corruptioin. In fact, it is the neglect of the individual and collective obligation to enjoin good and prohibit evil. That is the chief cause of the spreading of mischief and corruption.

About the process of decline, we have been told that it starts from the elite just as any process of reform begins at the gross roots, the common man, God says, when we decide upon the decay, and destruction of a society, we order the elite among them, to fall linto corruptions, and thus the doom of that society is confirmed. By the elite are meant those who hold some

power or influence in the society for good or for evil; the rulers, the bureaucrats, then those who hold the purse strings of money, wealth and finances, also priests and teachers. Their duty it was to serve society, to establish justice in society, equality in society, to guide and educate but they not only neglected their duty but used their position and prestige to serve their own selfish ends. And thus they became the main cause of *fasaad*, the cause of corruptions, and the cause of the doom of that city, and that civilisation. Thus civilisations rise, they flourish, they prosper, they dominate and after some time corruption seeps and spreads through the society and they decline and decay, and they are heard of no more.

God has taken one particular example, going deep into details, in order to illustrate some universal truths about the destiny of nations. God bestowed his special favour on *Banu Israel*. "We raised Prophets among you, and we made you kings". The presence of right guidance and the worldly power and authority are the signs of prosperity. As far as spiritual guidance is concerned, it is God who raises Prophets from among the people; where political power is concerned , that belongs to the whole nations, we made you Kings; we made you rulers. That is the description of the state of prosperity, where the condition of decay and decline is described, God says, that they were struck with humiliation *(zillat)* and deprivation *(Maskanat)*. Now what is *Zillat*? *Zillat* is political humiliation, and *Maskanat* is economic deprivation. What is political humiliation ? Political humiliation is when you take the policies of your government from other nations; political humiliation is that when you try to formulate policies for your own country, you have always to keep in mind, whether it will be approved by some other nation or not. That political humiliation is *zillat*. And *maskanat*, economic deprevation.

When you go about the world with a begging bowl in your hand seeking loans and donations and other things. That is *maskanat*. These are the signs of a nation in decay. Political humiliation, and economic deprivation.

Now we come to the other side, the side of religion. We have to bear in mind that forming empires, carving empires, building empires is none of the aims of religion. We shall discuss it in details also. This is one of the great misunderstandings about the nature of religion. God does promise the believing men that He will establish them on earth. But that does not mean that they should bend all their efforts towards achieving wordly power. Following the path of God will produce in them, individually and communally those qualities that entitle a people, in the eyes of God to hold dominion over land, to be established on earth, without fear and in peace. This granting of worldly power will come as a favour of God and also as a test. It is certainly not the aim, or the objective of Prophetic mission. The believing men are filled with a new vigour, with a new vision. Religion is a form of a revolution, a revolution with men, in fact, the only revolution that matters. Their values change, their outlook changes, their habits change. In the believing society there is more of repect for man, in that society, there is justice, in that society there is unity; then the believers have a positive vision before them. Their opponents are opposing them only because their vested interests and rotten values are challenged; their attitude is negative therefore, ultimately, sooner or later, power comes to the believing people. Sooner or later, that depends that upon the circumstances. Our Prophet, became the worldly ruler also. But we have to bear in mind, that this is an exception to the rule. How many Prophets can you mention, who became worldly rulers during thier life time ? This was an exception,

and the exception was due to objective conditions. There was a vacuum of political authority in Arabia, while the stage of social development called for the emergene of some central authority. The vacuum had to be filled, and the muslims became established on earth.

When a people become established on earth, when God favours them and they prosper and flourish, then their test begins, their trial begins. Our adversity is a test, our prosperity is also a test, but allow me to say, that prosperity is a greater test, harder test than that of adversity In adversity we do remember Him, but we forget Him very easily in the hour of prosperity, when we see ourselves endowed and equipped with power and wealth. We don't fully realize that power and wealth also entails responsibility, and good government is a great blessing for which we are all, one and all, to strive hard. Now what are the signs of good government ? What government shall we call good government ? First, this favour of God, this sovereignty has been bestowed upon the whole nation. Whatever the form of government may be, ruling government is a trust from God for the people. In trust for the people means that if the ruling authority is ruling the people against their will, then the ruler is a tyrant, he is a usurper, he is *Ghasib*, and if he is using this power for his own aggrandisement and not for the benefit of the people, then he is dishonest, a cheat, guilty of misappropriation. Whatever the form of government, it must be a government, enjoying confidence of the people and must have come to power through the approved way. And it must exercise its power for the benefit of the people, and there must be rule of law, the biggest in the land and the lowest, bowing before law, the *Shariat*. Thirdly as far as the people are concerned, the rule should be exercised with the consultation and with the cooperation of the

people Even the Holy Prophet did not mind condescending to take the advise of the people, though the decision was entirely his. One benefit of it was that it was agood training, necessary training in cooperation and participation. A good teacher also instead of imposing and inflicting himself on his students tries to take the students with himself, as if they are co-searchers in the field of knowledge. Next, the revenue of the land, has to be spent for the welfare of the people. Now, my friends, these are the signs of good government which have been dealt with in the Holy Book

Now I would ask you to remember one sermon of Imam Hussain Alaih Salaam. At one stage of his journey, he pointed out, the basis of his protest, and he said, "O people! I have heard the Prophet say that if a man sees a ruler who is a tyrant, (and tytrant means one who is ruling the people against their will), and who has violated his pledge to God, his contract with God, and who has allowed what God has forbidden and forbidden what God has permited, and who violates the laws and the ways and the *Sunnat* of the Prophet, (all that would mean, whose will is law, who does not care for law; the first and foremost enemy that a tyrant, a usurper has to face is law, the first casualty after a tyranny is established is that of law), and our Holy Imam proceeds on, " when he sees such a ruler, oppressing and repressing the people, and seeing all that, he does not oppose that tyranny, either by word or by deed, then, God in His justice, will consign that man also to the eternal perdition along with the tyrant " and then he said "don't you see that these people have entered into a pact with the devil, these people have repudiated their contract with God; these people have abrogated the limits set by God; these people have made lawful what is unlawful and have made unlawful what is lawful and these people squander the revenue

of the land for thier own aggrandisement, in order to make their own imperialism and their own rule strong, not caring for the welfare of men". Well that was the ground of protest, so clearly laid out by the Holy Imam. May the blessings of God be upon him, our salaam to him.

JEHAD AGAINST TYRANTS

By any objective standards our prophet, may peace and mercy of God be upon him, was the most successfull of all the prophets. You look to how the Muslim community, became established in the land, and how swiftly it spread to other lands and came to power and domination, and the community, and the religion which he founded, were also most successful. You won't find the like of it in the history of world religions. Yet when we consider that in this community based on the principles of unity and justice and brotherhood, how, so soon after the passing away of the Holy Prophet, dissentions broke out. The Medina turmoil shook the very foundations of this Muslim polity. Out of the four pious caliphs, three were not even allowed to die a natural death, and there occured bloody wars amongst Muslims themselves. Above all this tragedy, we are forced to suspect that there is something wrong, something of a malignant growth at the very core of the Islamic process.

I would like to just probe into this question. Yesterday I just referred to the dymanics of change. How does one nation, or one group of people gets supplanted by another group. I also referred to the promise of God i.e. if you believe and if you do righteous deeds then it is the promise of God that He will establish you in the land and will give you wordly dominion and make you inherit the earth. Let me summarise. Right belief and righteous action is the way of man's life. This is the straight way. This is the path of the Lord. Let men strive in it, oppose evil, do good and call others to good. Difficulties and persecutions will thwart their path. Let them face all these trials and tribulations with patience and complete trust in God. It is this cause – the cause of Truth and justice that shall prevail and God will also, in good time, invest the spon-

sors of the cause with worldly power and honour

Let us now briefly follow the career of the Prophet. I need not tell you the story of those persecutions which the Prophet had to suffer in order to propagate Islam in Mecca. Temptations came his way, threats came his way; he was ridiculed, people tried to kill him, he was ex-communicated, socially boycotted. Every sort of persecution he had to suffer, yet he persevered and he went on to face these situations with patience, and wisdom. All dedication was for God. With all serious minded dedication, he followed that path, the path of God. He sent his people abroad when he was being persecuted at home. During this time, he was talking to people in Madina also. He sent his men in Madina and in other places also. He was spreading the message of God all around. At the same time, the persecution was so strong in Mecca that he had to leave Mecca. The point here is that every attack by *Batil* or *Kufr* became a step in the success of his mission. When the Prophet walked the path of God, spreading the message of God, opposition came in his way, and in very phase, each opposition, became a step forward. Now look at *Hijrat* from Mecca to Madina, that seemed to be the triumph of the opponents of the Prophet, yet it became a turning point in the progress of Islam. In the same way, the treaty of Hodebia seemed to be a victory of the opponents, yet it became the prelude to the victory of Mecca. The advent of Islam was like a universe emerging from darkness. The darkness in its frustration attacked this light from all sides, but quite obviously in a struggle between darkness and light, it will be light that will always be victorious. Battles like *Badr* and *Khandak* were forced upon the Prophet to uproot him from the land but the result was that the community of the Prophet, became established in that land, in Arabia.

After becoming established in the land, well, what did the Prophet do ? He sent letters to the rulers of the world, i.e. to the Byzantine Emperor, to the Persian Emperor, to the ruler of Egypt, and to the other rulers also, inviting them all to Islam. Now certainly it was not that he wanted all of them to come and surrender everything and their rule to the Arabs. It was not that. Their highdoms were declining, and the Prophet carried this message to their men that if you want to avert the impending doom, there is the solution, the divine solution. If you follow this path, the path of Islam, you will bring about a revolution among your people that will not only save you and your country but will also usher in a cycle of life, far more prosperous and meaningful than any known so far. You are in so many difficulties, your society is faltering, it is in the last stage of decline; here is a perception that will give you new life with infinite possibilities of growth, undreamt growth and development. The Prophet of God, was carrying out his duty and sending his message fast, as if to broadcast it all over the world. What the internal condition of Arabia was, well you know quite well. At home the Prophet was inviting the tribes to Madina. Some people from different tribes would come to Madina, and they lived there for some time, as if it was the training camp. They would move about amongst the company of the Muslims, hear the sermons of the Prophet, talk to the companions of the Prophet and then they would go back to their tribes. This was one way of guiding the tribes. On the other hand people were being sent from Madina, to distant tribes. They would go there and would live with those tribes, propagating the message of Islam there. They would mix with the people there, and so in this way, the delegates were coming from the interior to Madina, and emissaries were going from Madina to distant parts of Arabia, so that Islam may be consolidated, and people may become firm in Islam. People

had joined the Islamic order, although they were to be steeped into the spirit of faith or *Iman*. At the time of the Prophet's death, the political control of the muslims was confined to *HEJAZ*. The tribes to the North and South had entered into a pact with the Prophet. They would subscribe to belief in the unity of Allah, the Judgement Day, and the Prophethood of the Prophet. They would perform ritual prayers and pay *zakat*. No political pressure would disturb their autonomous way of living. It was after the death of the Holy Prophet that the tribes of central and eastern Arabia to the farthest corner were brought into the fold during what are called "the wars of apostasy" waged under the command of Khalid Bin walid. The *Beduin* spirit was as strong as ever in their tribes. They had inherited little of the Islamic spirit. How did the new religion function in their lives? It brought all the tribes together So, fighting under one flag brought the tribal martial spirit so far scattered and wasted in the internecine strifes to a head. A huge momentum of military power was built up and the religious zeal sparked it off. The neighbouring empires – the Persian Empire and the Byzantine empire – were very impressive and formidable in appearance. But in fact they had passed their prime and were now declining. They could not bear the onslaught of the Arab hordes, brimful of fresh vigour and zeal. Within one decade, Persian empire was wiped off and the Byzantine empire had been deprived of Syria and Palestine. Thus, my friends, was founded the Muslim empire or you may call it Arab empire.

Now what were the results of these historical developments. Some of the results were good and some were bad. One good result was that Islam or the Muslims inherited the earth and in the domain of Islam were included lands that had been the seat of great civilizations. The muslims attained the status of

the world power and all the elements of the past civilisations that had the promise of life in them were resuscitated and transmuted. I would say that new prespectives were opening up, in the thought of Islam, in the life of Islam, in the culture and science of Islam. After a long struggle between the Arabs and the non-Arabs, new blood entered the veins of Islam. Those non-Arabs were asserting themselves and got absorbed in the corpus of what came to be called the Islamic culture. The Islamic culture, apart from its own wonder and value became the connecting link, running through the dark ages between the classical and the modern world.

Let me take this opportunity to point out a very common error, of thought. Purists and puritans often complain of the Pollution of Islamic culture by foreign elements. Now cultures do not grow in ivory towers. The capacity to absorb what it finds congenial and rejecting what it finds repugnant in the open cultural environment is the sign of vitality and vigour It is only when a culture has already grown anaemic, that it becomes swamped by foreign influences and loses its identity. A living vigorous culture is always stimulated and enriched by coming into contact with foreign cultures. The Islamic culture also became enriched by the induction of new races - Persian and Turks and Indians and others, with different cultural enrichment and it opened up new perspectives on Islamic thought.

For the subjugated races, the message of Islam acted like a clarion call. Witness the flowering of Persian language and literature, art and science and philosophy under the influence of Islam.

But all the results of this rapid, phenomenal expansion of

muslim political power were not good. I pointed out some of the consequences at the beginning of my talk. I referred to the great turmoil in the days of Hazrat Usman, after which Medina could no longer hold as the political and spiritual centre of Islam, and after which all prestige of authority was gone and anarchy entered into the souls of men. Anarchy was loosed upon the entire muslim world. That turmoil which was the result of that love of power and pelf had perverted the aims and dazzled the eyes of receptives and in which most of the muslims of note became involved except Hazrat Ali who tried to stem it, desparately but also unsuccessfully. Civil wars and dissensions that broke out like an epidemic everywhere sapped away whatever life blood of *Khilafat* (Kingdom of God) was still left till it was ultimately congealed into solid,massive, structure of *Malukiyyat* (imperialism).

It is often pointed out with pride that Medina society became so affluent that there was none, poor or needy to whom *zakat* could be given. This unearned affluence that flowed in with war booty had also a demoralising effect on the character of the people. More and more discrimination was being allowed in the distribution of this wealth. A pyramid of power and pelf was being raised and as it went up and up, more and more weight were being thrust upon the lower strata, chiefly the non-Arabs that constituted the base of it. The weeping of AbuDhar in the market place of Damascus in an hour of victory, his exile from Medina, his lonely death in a wilderness are a witness, too eloquent to be silenced. The Arab imperialism was building up.

Now every imperialism has its contributions and its limitations and compulsion. It is always the ambition of every imperialism to arrogate all authority to itself – every form of au-

thority, be it the authority of religion or of intellect. That is because all authority outside its pale is a potential danger to it. All authority. whatever its nature must be harnessed to serve its ends. The Muslim or the Arab imperialism had a limitation, a compulsion. The compulsion was imposed upon it by its very genesis. Its peculiarity was that, it was born out of religion. It must justify itself by religion ; rather it must find its sanctification in religion. It cannot break away from religion. It cannot declare it's secularity. It must swallow religion : otherwise religion will swallow it. Or if, in the nature of things, neither of these two alternatives is possible, then religion in its own interest must vindicate itself through sacrifice, asserting its integrity and exposing the true nature of imperialism. That was the mission of Imam Husain.

But, first very briefly,how was religious sensibility being affected by the rise of this imperialism. The primary and proper mission of religion is guiding man to the path of God and not the pursuit of worldly power. But, the Holy Book tells us that when a people follow the path of God, when they become reformed and disciplined and united in the service of Truth, worldly political power, dominion on earth is also bestowed upon them as a gift of God and a test for the people. The muslims on the whole, mostly new converts,were as yet deficient in the spiritual pre-requisites. Power had come too soon and in a vast measure – faster than the wildest dreams. So power, for them, came first ; rather that was the form in which they became acquainted with religion. And even today there are people who find in the muslim empire,not only the culmination and fulfilment of Islam but also the proof and criterion of its truth. As if political power is the only enabling condition that makes Islam viable. Forgetting that the world has seen empires vaster than the Islamic empire, e.g. the British

empire ; and swifter in their rise, e.g. the Mongol power.
Every tyrant and usurper quotes the text and perverts its meaning to justify his authority and honour. Everything in the world happens by the will of God and the will of God is good. A majority of Muslims share this belief forgetting that the setting up of a tyrant in power over a people is God's punishment and a warning and trial for that people and an ultimate cause for their downful.

In short the teaching of religion is perverted and exploited into making every tyrant the shadow of God and beating down the spirit of man into vile and abject submission to the idols of success and power.

Now as you see, the predicament and the challenge which confronted Imam Husain was very different from situation that faced the Holy Prophet and the problems that he was called upon to tackle. In the case of the Holy Prophet, his followers had entered the pale of Islam with full conviction and commitment to the path of truth and justice. Their number was growing and the message of Islam was spreading inspite of all the difficulties and obstructions put in the way. Those people from whom the followers of the Holy Prophet had broken away became their enemies for they felt and rightly so that the new way of life that was emerging would upset the old structure of society and topple down their gods whom they had been worshipping and destroy their pride and prestige and the conventional values and ways of living. On the one side were the *Kafirs* who had rejected Islam when it was offered to them. To them, their way of life was very dear and on the other side there were muslims to whom their way of life was dearer for them than their life. The difference and distinction between the two groups was clean and clear. There

was not a bit of confusion. The *kafirs* were far numberous but they were in mortal fear of the growing power of Islam. In desparation they turned upon the muslims to finish them before their number and power grows too formidable and gets out of control. The muslims stood up to defend. not their lives, but those values which alone gave meaning of their lives and to die so that those values may live was the very crown and fulfilment of life. That was *Jehad*. *Badr* became the *Youm-e-Furqan*, the Day of Decision between *Haq* (Truth) and *Batil* (Falsehood). The conquest of Mecca signalled the final defeat of the forces of *Batil* – their suppression and subjugation.

In Imam Husain's day *Batil* (Falsehood) did not stand and manouvre from outside the pale of Islam. After the earlier defeats, it had entered the pale of Islam and was masquerading as Islam. What is more it was re-emerging and occupying the seat of power and authority. There was confusion all around : confusion finding its way into the hearts of the people, confusion worst confounded because of the dazzling worldly success that came to the muslims. The idol of imperialism set up in the centre and drawing the ultimate allegiance of the believers.

The Prophet had been ordered by God to fight the disbelievers and the hypocrites. The Prophet had fought the disbelievers. The day of fighting hypocrisy had not yet come. By the time of Imam Husain, hypocrisy had become so strong and aggresive that it was replacing Islam altogether. The emergence of imperialism was perverting the meaning of religion and expoiting it to serve its own ends. *Kufr* posed the threat to the body structure of Islam; *Nifaq* was vitiating the very spirit of Islam. How shall *Nifaq* be exposed and Islam vindicated.

Jihad agains *Nifaq* calls for a different strategy than the one needed in *Jihad* against *Kufr*.

No armies have to be raised for the evil is not outside. It lies deep down the neck of the people. The adversary, in effect, is a variety of Islam – which claims tyrants as champions, which puts the judgement and self respect of men to sleep, which reconciles them to living in a condition of slavish fear and greed and exploitation and glorifying in the worship and service of the pomp and show of power. This is the adversary and the task to be accomplished is to open the eyes and hearts of men so that the eternal values of Islam may be rescued from this captivity and truth may be revitalised. Only those who have borne witness to the truth of Islam throughout their lives and who are known as such even by their enemies,who have no personal interests or grudges, whose loves and hatreds are all for the sake of God, who have never been neglectful in their duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil, only such men are qualified to serve this cause – the Husaini cause. Such are the followers of Imam Husain. The last day which they passed in the company of Imam Husain has put the final, finishing touches on their life-long spiritual training. Now their capacity to suffer and sacrifice has become infinite. Any compromise on principle is now the negation of this very principle of their being . Each one and all of them – relatives and friends and women and children and old men and young, a whole pattern of humanity – now they have become absorbed in the spirituality of one Husain. Now they are not seventy two persons. There is just one Husain, the eternal Husain, the universal Husain. Husain standing in the presence of his God, the Redeamer of man.

And during those few hours, a tradition of life was started for

all time to come – the word that inspires the weakest, the most helpless man with undying faith and hope and the courage to face all odds. This is the tradition which safeguards the pristine purity of the Islamic belief in the oneness of God. For if there have been tyrants in the muslim history, there have also been those who have rejected and exposed and opposed.

In fact, it is through suffering and sacrifice that Truth keeps itself pure and alive and active.

It is this tradition that runs like a golden thread through the history of Islam , without which the history of Islam would be but a chronicle of Kings without meaning or significance.

IMAMAT AND KHILAFAT

The learning and wisdom of prophets belongs to the divine plan of guidance. Its place, and its function is to ensure the survival, continuity, the purity and the vitality of *'Deen'*. The *Imam* is the heir to the learning and wisdom of the Prophet and its custodian, and this is the function of the office of *Imamat*. Now if worldly rule is available, then this worldly rule, rightfully belongs to *Imamat*. But if *Imamat* is denied that right of worldly rule, nevertheless, it is *Imamat* just the same Just as a Prophet is a Prophet, whether his people deny him the right of becoming the worldly ruler, or whether his people throw him into prison. In the same way, even if the people of the *Imam* throw him into prison, even then he is their Master, or the leader of that community. *Imamat* is independent of this adjunct, just like Prophethood. It is independent of the fact whether the man who holds the office of the *Imam*, is also the worldly ruler of the community or not.

At this juncture, let us very clearly distinguish between *Imamat* and *Khilafat*. These two offices are different in their entirety; even their *Be'at* is different. The worldly ruler is a worldly ruler, or *Khalifa* in the colloquial sense is a *Khalifa*, only because people have pledged allegiance to him. But in the case of *Imam*, it is quite different, in fact it is the other way round. People owe allegiance to him and pledge their allegiance to him because he is the *Imam*. First he is the *Imam* and then people owe allegiance to him. People owe it to him for it is his right. In case of *Khilafat*, people pledge their allegiance and by virtue of it, he becomes worldly ruler or *Khalifa*. Secondly, if there is no territory, there is no *Khalifa*, but *Imam* is *Imam*, territory or no territory. Then another point

of difference which is between *Hukumat* and *Hidayat*, or between *Khilafat* and *Imamat* is, that, *Khilafat or Hukumat* can be given or taken away. *Imamat* on the other hand, can neither be given nor can it be taken away. So, these two concepts are fundamentally different from each other. And they ought not be confused. Much of the misunderstanding is the result of the fact that we confuse these two conceptions which are fundamentally different.

Imamat is above any dispute, or above any controversy. It cannot be disputed. *Hukumat* can be disputed, and is often disputed, but *Imamat* is not disputed. It is non-controversial, no controversy is possible. In the early history, after the passing away of the Prophet, there was a contest for the office of the headship, the administrator , the ruler of the community, or the *millat*. Certain arguments were being advanced such as we belong to the tribe of Quraish, the tribe to which the Prophet also belonged, or that we are his relatives, or we are early Muslims or first Muslims or we have the insight into Islam, and have served Islam. Hazrat Ali was replying to all these arguments, point by point such as the nearness to the Prophet, the insight into the truth of Islam, or the service to Islam. Point by point he was replying to every argument, but, in *'Nahjul Belagha'*, not even once did Hazrat Ali plead the *Hadees-e-Gadeer* as an argument in support of his claim to the headship of the state. This was because it was far too sacred to be brought into this controversy about *Hukumat*. Well, that was above any dispute or any controversy. This point has to be particularly marked, namely that at no place, not even once did Hazrat Ali plead the *Hadees-e-Gadeer* in support of his claim to the headship of the state, though *Hadees-e-Gadeer* is one of the most authentic *Hadeeses*. Now as the *Imam*, the first thing which he did was, that he sacrificed his

personal right. Though the claim was always there, he sacrificed it for the sake of the survival of the *millat*. You know, this Islamic *millat* was in the very early tender stages of its existence. It could not bear a civil war. Had a civil war broken out, the *millat*, the state would have perished in that civil war. At this point, let me narrate a little dialogue. Our lady of light, Bibi Syeda, was insisting on Hazrat Ali, urging him to stand and strive for his right. Afterall was not that his right, and he was seeing that his right was being taken away from him. He was being deprived of that right, the right to serve Islam as head of the State. And Hazrat Ali, that hero of a hun dred battles, listened quite silently, and kept on listening. Just then the call to prayer, the *Azaan* came from the mosque. Now that was the reply of Hazrat Ali, and he said "O! Daughter of the Prophet, do you want that this voice should be silenced for ever?" and tears rolled down the cheeks of the lady. That was it, that was the guidance. And whenever the *Khilafat* or the administration that followed, was in some difficulty on some judicial point or on some administrative point or on some point of policy, and it was referred to Hazrat Ali, he very open heartedly, solved that difficulty, for that was the service of Islam. He was the one man who did all that he could in order to avoid that *Al fitnatul kubra* that turmoil which occured in the heart of the Muslim community i.e. in Madina. You study the career and attitude of all those elite, the great persons, the prominent men of the community of the day and you will find that directly or indirectly, they were involved in the turmoil, except this one man. So, that is what he did during this period as the *Imam*.

And then he was very reluctantly forced to accept the rulership of the community, or the *Millat*. By that time, the whole character of the Muslim *Millat* had changed. Lust for power

and wealth had become rampant among the elite of the Muslim *Millat*. You look to the wealth which they bequeathed. Among the masses, there was not an iota of discipline. Whatever discipline they had been trained to during the times of the Prophet; that was all gone after that holocaust. A sort of anarchy, anarchy in thought and will and action had taken place. Well, that was the state of the *Millat*. Hazrat Ali strove as best as he could, and who could strive more, to bring this *millat* back to the track of *deen*, the track of *Sirat-e-Mustaqeem*. He strove his best, but the tide of time, when it adopts and assumes a certain direction, cannot be turned back. It is like a sea storm, it can be diverted into other channels but it cannot be turned back. All that a man can do is to justify himself, not to swerve from the path that he has chosen, not to swerve from the path of his duty, and my friends, in this sense, Hazrat Ali justified himself magnificiently. No temptation in the work, no difficulty, no obstacle, no pressure, no compulsion could make him swerve an inch from that path of duty which he so clearly laid before himself. That is why, he was justified in the last words of his when that blow was struck on his head. "By the Lord of Kaaba, I came out successful". Inspite of such temptations, such difficulties, his will never faltered, nor did his courage fail. He followed the path of duty, that is the *Sirat-e-Mustaqeem*.

Now my friends, when Imam Hasan succeeded to power, i.e. this worldly power, things had deteriorated still further, the confusion had become worst confounded, *deen* and *mulk* were mixed together, so that you could not distinguish between the two, and the direction was clear. What was the direction which these things, which these trends, which these times were taking. Even in the days of Hazrat Ali, there were so many defections from the army of Hazrat Ali, to the army of

Amir-e-Sham, Muawya. That shows the direction; the trend of the times. There was no defection from the army of Muawya to the army of Hazrat Ali. This was the trend of the time when, Imam Hasan renounced that worldly rule and gave it to Muawya.

Many people point out, on many grounds in order to present, a sort of apology for what Imam Hasan had done. As you know it must have been a very hard decision for Imam Hasan. Now I would draw your attention to what Imam Hasan has himself said about it . Imam Hasan says "that I did what Khizr had done" In the parable of the Quran Hazrat Musa (Moses) could not understand what Khizr was doing. If you turn to the story of Khizr and Moses in the Holy Book what do you find, what did Khizr do? Khizr made a hole in the boat in which he was travelling, the boat in which the poor sailors plied as their trade. The explanation which came later on was that there was a tyrant on the island, and he would usurp all the good boats that were there. Now that he would see that boat leaking, he would not care to usurp it and the boat, though defective would be left to be plied by the poor sailors. The second thing which Khizr did was, that he killed a man, a young man, for no fault of his. The later explanation was that this man was very impudent, very obstinate, and he was a son of a father who was very pious. The fear was that this man will bring a bad name to his father, and so this boy was killed. The parents, will be rewarded with another good, upright son, who would bring joy and honour to the old parents. That was the explanation. And the third act was that a wall which had fallen, Khizr repaired and built that wall. The explanation of it was that a treasure was buried under that wall and if that wall had fallen, that treasure would be exposed. Then it would be squandered away. It would not reach the hands of

the two orphans, sons of very good parents. and all this wealth and their treasure would be taken away by the enemies. so this wall was raised in order to keep the treasure safe till such time that legitimate heirs become mature and enter into their legacy.

Now my friends just think over it. Giving the rule entirely to Muawya that was like making a hole in the boat of Islam, that was faulting the boat of Islam, the ship of Islam. Uptill then. *deen* and *mulk* had not become estranged. In Muslim society. they co-existed in the same milieu. Now if things are allowed to continue the way they are going. the result is all obvious. i.e. *deen* would be almost swallowed by *mulk*. *Mulk* will rate supreme and there will be no *deen*, or a *deen* fashioned to the needs of the *mulk*. So, what did Imam Hasan do? Imam Hasan rescued this *deen* from the clutches of *mulk*. The time will come when *deen* will assert itself but now at least a salvaging operation, a saving operation was the urgent need of the moment. *Deen* had to be saved . and immediately. And for the first time in the history of Islam, there was a parting of ways between *deen* and *mulk* Now there were two successors of Islam, i.e. one of them was *deen* and the other was *mulk*, but the *mulk* had become so aggressive and oppressive, that now it claimed the whole legacy. Khizr slaughtered that man, that boy. Both of them, the *mulk* as well as *deen* were the offspring of Islam. You can't say that this other tree, i.e. this *mulk* had not grown out of Islam. It had grown out of Islam. What Imam Hasan did was in one stroke he repudiated that *mulk*, that *asbiyat*, the *asbiyat* which claimed, affiliation to Islam, and which claimed to be the only legacy of Islam.

As far as *deen* was concerned, well *deen* will vindicate itself on the battlefield of Karbala Wait for that, and Islam will be re-

warded with that, and as far as this treasure is concerned, my friends, this is the treasure of *deen*, which rightfully belonged to the progeny of Muhammad. If this wall is allowed to fall down, the result will be that in this civil war, this treasure would fritter away, and there would be no legacy left to Islam. So for some time *Deen* has to be segregated in the rightful private custody till its claim is publicly vindicated on the battlefield of Karbala and it is established for all time to come that *Deen*, now in the form of Husain is the heir of Islam, and not *hukumat* in the form of Yazid and that the real successor of Madina is Karbala and not Damascus and Baghdad. Imam Hasan drank the cup of poison and converted it into the elixir for Islam. Had not Imam Hasan willingly embraced the agony of hearing his father (and what a father!) reviled and cursed daily from the pulpits of mosques, Karbala could not have appeared because Karbala is discriminating good from evil and distinguishing those who love Islam and sacrifice their all from those who prostitute Islam. Who can now question, who is the king, who is *Shah*, who is *Badshah*, where is *deen*, where is the refuge of *deen*, *'Shah ast Husain, Badshah ast Husain, Deen ast Husain, Deen Panah ast Husain'*

DEEN AND MULK

We saw in our last talk how a bifurcation had occured, in the Islamic society which was almost to the point of a rift. Formerly, *deen* and *mulk* lay intertwined, undifferentiated. Now they were set apart; a bifurcation had taken place. The *mulk* occupied the centre of the stage, and *deen* retired into holy solitude to fortify and re-inforce itself. The stage was set, for the final confrontation, on the battlefield of Karbala.

In one of my talks, perhaps it was the first me, I refered to the message of Islam, and there I emphasised the prime importance of *Tazkiya*. *Tazkiya* means purification and elevation of self, improving the quality of being in order to be capable of *Ilm-e-Kitab* and *Hikmat.*, the knowledge of the Book and Wisdom. These two go together; being and knowledge go together. Your knowledge corresponds with the level of your being. There is a sort of identification between the two; you can know only what you are fit to know. There is a correspondence between the perception and the state and level of your consciousness. the same situation is perceived in different ways, by different persons, according to their state and nature of consciousness.

After the death of Muawya, a certain situation arose in Arabia. The perceptions of different people were different, though the event was the same, the passing away of Muawya. Let us just see what these different perceptions were. For Yazid, his father Muawya, had made everything very easy, smooth and cosy. For him the path was a bed of roses. There were of course certain thorns, but those thorns could be pulled out; after all he had got the force, the power, and the wealth. Naturally, as per his consciousness he could think that either by

just bribing people, or by forcing people, he could bend them to his will, and make them bow before him. So that was the only problem before Yazid, and he set out to solve his problem, according to his perception. There were others also whose perceptions were different; for instance there was Ibn-e-Zubair. Ibn-e-Zubair's perception was that now the opportunity has come since Muawya has passed away. Yazid is not Muawya, and now is the time to make a bid for power. But wait and watch how Husain reacts to this situation, for as long as Husain is alive, people would turn to him, and they won't turn to anybody else; that was the perception of Ibn-e-Zubair

What was the perception of Imam Husain? The perception of Imam Husain was that the hour of destiny had struck. Now that was the time to fulfill the last part of his pact with God. His pact with God, was that when *deen* will need his sacrifice, Husain will sacrifice his all for the sake of saving *deen*. The Prophet of Islam had been the witness of this pact, and his parents Hazrat Ali and Bibi Syeda, were witness to this pact too. Now was the time; the hour had struck, and the last part of that pact must be fulfilled. This struggle, this conflict was going on for a long time, the complications has continued too long. This was the time to write the last act of the drama; the drama, which had continued for so long. Well, my friends that was the perception of Imam Husain. The call has come and Husain is ready. The last challenge of worldliness to Godliness, the final challenge. It is now or never. This is the situation with different perceptions.

For Imam Husain, this is the time to act, and give a suitable response to the challenge. The challenge is not Yazid's demand for the pledge of allegiance. That demand is only a sign, rather, the ultimate sign. The real challenge is a cry coming

out of Islam's bleeding heart which Husain alone can hear. My friends, our acts are diverse. There are acts which are just mechanical, reflex actions with no meaning and no deliberation in them. You feel a need, you satisfy that need, almost mechanical cause and effect, action and reaction relationship. Yet there are other acts, which are acts of higher category. These are living acts, acts which are deliberated, and the response, which you give to a challenge, will in fact accord with your consciousness, your nature, with what you actually are, because all our actions are just the projection of ourselves, of what we are. There is a verse in the Holy Book, which means that every man acts according to the pattern, according to the form of his consciousness, his personality, of his self, according to the habit of his nature. That is as if to say that, as the man is within, so will be his act, the outer act. There is a saying of the Prophet also, and that is "to every man, that for which he has been created is made easy" i.e. the tendency of his nature. If he follows the tendencies of his nature, that act becomes easy. A very large portion of human acts is but the projection of our desires, our lusts and appetites. They fill life with sound and fury, signifying nothing. A tale told by an idiot' Then there are acts, very useful, very necessary, acts, that serve the ends of daily, ordinary business of life. You say that such acts are like mechanical acts. They provide the infrastructure of life.

But there are also those acts that are like the noblest masterpieces of all fine arts, that is the art of living. Every fine art has its own medium, the medium of words, colour, stone, marble. The artist breathes his own vision into the medium, and something new and strange is created.

The master of the art of living meets a particular life situa-

tion. A certain life situation confronts him. He breathes his own vision and spirit into it. A new universe of value and meaning is created. New possibilities, new heights of the life of man are discovered. This is what we call *"uswah"* or the life-pattern of the Prophet or the Imam This is a work of art, consistent, one and multi dimensional.

The whole act is creative, something new is being created. The creation of the world is God's work of art; God is the absolute He is *'Ahsanul Khaliqeen'*, as God says about Himself. He is the creator, He is the originator. He is the designer, painter, *Khaliq, Bari,* and *Musavir*. He is *Khaliq, Bari* and *Musavir*, and whatever. He has created, the heavens and the earth, and whatever is in heaven or earth, He has created with truth, *Haq*, and *Haq* is God Himself also. Everything that is created bears the signature of the Creator. There is that divine touch in everything that has been created, and then God says, "whatever We have created, We have made beautiful". So, my friends, these are the characteristics of a great work. The inner substance of it is truth, and the outer form of it is beauty. The inner nature of a great work, or of a great act, is truth, and the outer form is beauty. Likewise the content or the inner nature of Karbala is truth, the outer form of Karbala is beautiful. Husain gives a response to the challenge implied in the life situation that he faces. He breathes his own spirit into it. The result is that something new is created. Karbala is created. The meaning of Karbala does not remain confined to that particular time or that particular occasion. It has now become an eternal universe. Such was the challenge, and such was the response of Imam Husain, that Karbala has been created. An eternal universe has been created, something of abiding and eternal value, a beacon of light, for our guidance, has been created.

What shall be our approach to Karbala? Beware friends, through your apologies, your justifications, your explanations, yes, your empty laudations, and lately your revolution jargon, while you think that you are serving or illumining the cause of Karbala - you may actually be dragging down Karbala to the level of your own perceptions, putting your own thoughts and motives and your own logic into the mind of Imam Husain What is the first condition, the basic qualification for understanding a great personality, a great act, or a great book? The first condition is that you should be able to accept the personality, the act, the book. Not everyone is capable of that Acceptance means divesting yourself of all your prejudices, shedding your preconceptions and all your mental reservations. Meditate on it, enter into the spirit of it, absorb as much of it as your level of being allows you to do; from action or the book to the person, from person to the action or the book. This is the range of your sojourn and this experience will make you a wiser man, also a sadder man. In the Holy Book, a parable has been given, that of *Kalma-e-Tayyaba*, which means the right word, the true work. This Karbala, the event, the reality of Karbala, is a *Kalma-e-Tayyaba*. About this *Kalma-e-Tayyaba*, it has been written, it's a Godly tree, it's the tree of life. Sow the seed of it in your heart. Its roots are firm in the earth, and its branches are in heavens, covering all the shades of life. Another characteristic of this tree of life is that it bears fruits in all seasons. People come to it for nourishment. They get the fruit, which they are capable of, for which they are qualified and which they need. Such is the tree of knowledge, or *Kalma-e-Tayyaba*.

A great Act has its message for every man according to his capacity. A great act has its message for every age. Every age

approaches that great act and understands it in its own way. The meaning of that great act is inexhaustable. If you trace this Karbala down the ages, and see what karbala has meant for the life of men and women, what impact Karbala has made on history; how it has changed the minds of men, how it has inspired them, than you will see wonderfully, that from age to age its meaning, its message has been in accordance with the needs of that age. My friends in the hours of distress, in the darkest hour, Karbala has kept the lights burning. In the coldest dungeons, Karbala has kept you warm. When it seemed as if, everything had gone. and you were, helpless, Karbala was the pillar of hope for you. Just study your history, stage by stage, age by age, and you find that Karbala is giving a message, to every age, and to every man, according to his capacity and according to his need. In our hours of trial and tribulations Karbala gave us the courage and the wisdom, to suffer, and bear all that sufferings. The courage and the wisdom to suffer, my friends, that's the key to all success and prosperity. Today we are seeking for a new way of life, a renaissance, a synthesis, in this modern age, and Karbala will show us the way to uphold the eternal values and to affirm the integrity of self in the confusion of changing times. So in every age, and at every time Karbala has been guiding us. Karbala has been giving its message. Can this meaning and message ever be exhausted? It can never be exhausted.

Don't you ask about the end and purpose of Karbala? karbala is not means to an end. It needs no justification. It is an end in itself. It is a testament of truth invoked by Husain, a symbol of life arising from death, far greater than the historical occasion or challenge of time. Don't think of the *maqsad* of Karbala, think of your own *maqsad*. Is there any worthy *maqsad* in your life. If so, you will find that *maqsad*, in Karbala.

You will find that *maqsad* in the dust that has been raised by the Caravan of Karbala. A man who wants to fight evil surely for the sake of God, he will find his *maqsad* in Karbala. If so, seek mystic communication with God, you will find your purpose and meaning in Karbala. If some one is a seeker of Truth, if he wants to know the meaning of Truth, he will find that meaning in Karbala. Karbala will reveal the deeper layers of meaning in Quranic terminology. He will find the meaning of *Jehad*. Till then *Jehad* had only one meaning; in Karbala, the meaning of *Jehad* has expanded. *Jehad* has a different meaning now. Before Karbala, *Jehad* was possible or permissible only when you had power, a body like an army Now you look not to the number; you look to the quality of men, the piety of men, what kind of men you have, not how many men you have. Quality has so far dominated number that quality alone counts; number has ceased to exist. Even when the whole world is against you, the way to *Jehad* is open because God is on your side. *Jehad* is the test of love that the All-loving God has condescendingly given you in order to elevate you and when God is on your side, *"mulk"* is yours and victory is yours.

And as for the meaning of *mulk*, it used to be just worldly authority or dominion over territory. But now after Karbala, the meaning of *mul*k has also changed. Now *mulk* means not rule over territory, now it means, rule over the hearts of men. Just think who is living today, whose Kingdom it is today ? It is of Yazid or of Husain? To whom does the *mulk* belong today? So, the meaning of *mulk* has also changed, the meaning of victory, or *Fateh* has changed. The meaning of life and death has changed, i.e. in death lies life, life coming out of death. Now you know that if you are seeker of truth, you will find that in Karbala. The meanings in the

Holy Quran, the layers and layers of meaning, depths, the mysteries, well, the mysteries of Quran, they are explained, they are demonstrated in the book of Karbala, only if you have the eyes to see and only if you have understanding for that, in whatever situation you may be.

In your personal life which cannot be free of sorrows and bereavements and disappointments, Karbala is your never-failing-support. If you have come with a broken heart here you will find consolation; weep your heart out, and you will establish a communion with the martyrs of Karbala. The martyrs of Karbala will put their healing hand on your hand and you will find consolation there.

If you lost all hopes in men, and in the future of humanity, look to Karbala. Karbala is like a pillar of life, like a beacon of light, it will inspire you, with hope, and with faith. It will give faith and courage. If you find yourself confined in a tight corner of life, Karbala again will give you the courage and the wisdom, the courage and wisdom to bear all the sufferings, and God will find you a way out. So my friends in this way, now the possibilities of life have been widened. Something which seemed impossible, has now been made possible. When it seemed as if there was no way out as Imam Husain himself said, i.e. "even if I go and take shelter in the holes of the wild animals, these people will bring me out". There is no refuge for Imam Husain even in the holes of the wild animals, or in the house of God, no refuge for Imam Husain, but God be praised, the way to Karbala is opened up. Those complications and confusions which were continuing, those intrigues and intricacies between *deen* and *mulk* became cleared up. Now look at *Deen;* the light of God shines pure and steady. Now, if you will try to find religion, you know where religion is; you won't

go to those Kings, to those tyrants, or to those who have conquered land after land. You will go to the men of God, to those who have actually challenged those tyrants, and have uttered the words of truth the words of justice, without any fear and without seeking anybody's favor. When you make your calendar of the Divine men, the heroes of your soul, in that calendar you do not put kings, tyrants, or great conquerors; on the other hand you put there some saints, you put there some men who have the courage and wisdom, knowledge of the Book and *hikmat,* some men who stood up for the glory of God and love of men to protest against the tyrannies. Those men spent their lives serving mankind and glorifying God. They suffered and sacrificed their lives and forever kept faith alive and the hope and promise of the ultimate triumph of Truth and Justice. This will be the calendar of our saints and this is the blessings of Karbala. Karbala has set a tradition of opposition to tyrants, and a tradition of *ma'refat*, a tradition at once composite of Action and Prayer. In this tradition, you find your hope, and your refuge. This is what karbala has done for us. Karbala has become a part of our life. We look at our life in that light. Whenever we are in sorrow, or whenever we are in happiness, Karbala becomes a part of our greater life, a part of our deeper life, a part of the history of our soul. Everything that has subsequently happened in the history of Islam, you will find its origin in those early days. This is what Karbala has meant to us.

Everyone of us has his pact with God. The pact of Imam Husain was written in words of fire and it was sealed with blood. At our level, at our own stage, all of us, have our pact with God. Try to be conscious of that and if you have included the spirit of Karbala, to any extent, you will have to call Husain as your witness to that pact. Well my friends, I wish and I

pray, that all of us may be, worthy citizens of this universe of Karbala and if it is not possible for us, sinners as we are, to live and move in Karbala, we may at least derive inspiration and guidance and light for our petty lives from this source. This is the source. Now Islam has no meaning without Karbala. If you leave out Karbala, then Islam won't have any meaning for you. If you leave out karbala, then what will *jehad* mean for you, or what will *fateh*, (victory) mean for you, or what will worship of God mean for you? What will life mean for you? Now, it has become almost, a compulsion, or an obligation; you cannot do without Karbala. Once you have touched the fringe of Karbala, you cannot run away from it. Whenever you think of your pact with God, or whenever you try to understand Islam, you can do it only, in the terms and in the idiom of Karbala, so, Karbala has thus become a part of our greater life, a proof of God for us, the meaning of Islam for us, and our salutations to him, who has given us this heritage, the great heritage of Karbala. May we be worthy of this Trust. It certainly is a great Trust.

THE MEETING WITH GOD

The last chapter or the last act starts with *be'at* (the pledge of allegiance). To be able to understand, the significance of *be'at*, let us focus our attention, on him, who is demanding *be'at*, and on him, from whom this *be'at* is being demanded. The person from whom this *be'at* is being demanded is the Imam, the symbol of God's guidance on earth, the substance of divine guidance. It is his privilege to ensure the purity, and the vitality of *'deen'*. That is his privilege. He is the hope and the last refuge/resort of *deen*, for he is the Imam, the embodiment of Islam. He is the living *shaheed*, because every moment of his life he bears witness to his Master, the Lord, his God. Islam is his life, in fact more than his life. Islam is his love, the love for which the sacrifice of life will be the fulfilment of life. Now, you turn to the other picture, the man who has demanded *be'at*. He is representative of the lust for power and wealth, inordinate lust for power and wealth. He is out to distort Islam, and to exploit Islam in order to strengthen his rule, or legitimise his rule. He has just one problem, one constraint, one instance, the personality of Husain; because the very presence of Husain is a protest against all that he stands for. It is a protest, a challenge, a threat, a condemnation It is, in fact, a negation of all that Yazid stands for. In Husain's presence, Yazid seems to be and feels to be totally insignificant and guilty, inspite of all his pomp and circumstance. There is essenial antagonism between the two, an incompatibility. These two cannot exist together. Yazid, must strive his best to bend Husain before his will or to break him into pieces. This barrier, this obstacle, this challenge, must be defeated or destroyed. Well, as far as Husain is concerned, allegiance to Yazid will be a betrayal of God, a violation of his nature. There is no question of a choice. It is

simply impossible, constitutionally impossible, absolutely impossible. Now my friends, under this situation *Be'at* has been demanded. The ultimate challenge has come, and Husain has come, after leaving Madina, the city of the Prophet. The emissary of the Prophet is going to Mecca, the house of God, the centre of Islamic life. In Mecca, stands *'Kaaba'* the visible symbol and sign of God. It symbolises the unity of mankind in the worship of one God. It also symbolises man's consciousness of always standing and living in the presence of God. It symbolises the readiness of man to answer to the call of God. *"Labbaik, Allah Huma Labbaik"*, "Here I am, O! God, ready in Thy Presence" The call comes from God. The man shows his readiness to answer to that call. It is a sanctuary for those who worship God. But what does Husain find here? It has become a hot bed of intrigue. The house of God is under the administration of a tyrant, and whenever that happens, the spirit of Islam lies there chained and imprisoned. It was meant to be the goal and the refuge of men. Now it has become an ambush, an ambush for the tyrant's hired assassins. This cloak and dagger strategy, has already been introduced in the political armoury of the "Islamic" state. Yazid is out to try this strategy, in the very heart of *Kaaba*, on the house of Prophet. This house of God, *Kaaba*, is no more the abode of peace; it has become a nursery of *fasaad*. Husain stays in Mecca, watching how the situation develops. As the day of Eid is coming near, people are coming to Mecca, a cross section of the Islamic kingdom, and Husain is studying the currents, and cross currents and under currents, the views, opinions, attitudes of men, their reactions, their trends. Husain is studying all these deeply.

Now, letters are also reaching him, letters after letters, from Kufa. The people of Kufa are calling " O! Imam, now is the time, come and lead us, we are thirsty, quench our thirst we

are groping in the darkness for the right way, for the right path. Come and lead us to the right path". The Imam sends his emissary, his cousin to Kufa. If you call your Imam for help or for guidance, even today that guidance will come. The call will be answered and the assistance will come, since such is the relationship between Imam and his followers. It is a necessary relationship. The Imam will bestow his assistance. Will the followers also rise equal to receive it ? The whole situation is tense. People are curious to see, what the next step of Husain is going to be; his reaction, his response to the nefarious demand of Yazid. His peers, his friends, approached him, ready with their counsels which they offer sincerly, in some cases diplomatically, "O! Son of the Holy Prophet, leave Hijaz. Hijaz is no place for you, go to some other place, where your followers, where your believers are in great numbers; go to Yemen. Raise an army, you have got so many followers, and fight this tyranny". But for Husain, he has some promises to keep; it is his hour of destiny, and there is no running away from destiny. The appointed day is near: again they come, "O! Son of the Prophet, do not go to Kufa, you know that these people of Kufa are traitors, what have they done to your father? What have they done to your brother? They are not to be trusted". Well, Husain knows, that now there is no place on earth for him, no refuge, as he says himself, "even if I go and seek shelter in the caves and holes of wild animals, these people will take me out". But God has always been the refuge of Husain. As for the people of Kufa, Husain knows them, far better than his counsellors did. Husain never trusted them. Husain's trust is in his God, He has to follow His path on which he is directed by God. The letters of the Kufians are just a pointer to the path he has to take. Husain hears all these counsels. "O! Son of the Prophet, if you are bent upon going to Kufa, please don't take your wom-

en and children with you". What could Husain say in reply to them. It is like some great artist is painting a picture, developing an image, and he puts one line here, and puts one colour there; and if somebody asks him at that time as to why has he drawn this line here, or put that colour there, what can he say? He can only ask him to wait till the picture develops. Once the picture will fully develop, only then will you know the meaning of all these lines and all these colours. All the questions will then answer themselves. Perhaps this is what Husain could say. Wait! and let Karbala develop, and then you ask these questions to yourself. If these women and the children were not there in Karbala, would not the whole picture lose so much in its meaning. Would the message be complete without them? As far as these children are concerned, they give a colour and a meaning to picture which I am drawing. As far as these women are concerned, they will complete what I am doing. Without them, what I am doing will remain incomplete. Husain listens to all these counsels and suggestions and does God's bidding. He has come to Mecca, to the House of God, in order to seek the guidance from God. That guidance has come. God will be waiting for Husain on the plains of Karbala: that is the meeting place And Husain turns to the people and says, "The venue of my martyrdom has been fixed and I must arrive there before the appointed hours. I must arrive there". He continues, "it is as if I am seeing the wild wolves of the desert tearing my body, piece by piece, bit by bit, and filling their bellies and baskets with my flesh. I see those wild wolves near the desert of Nainava, and our pleasure, the pleasure of *"Ahl-e-Bait"* lies in the pleasure of God. That is our pleasure, we are willing, O! God, we are willling, we have heard the call". Then he says futher that "whoever amongst you is desirous of meeting his God, of standing in the presence of God, let him come with me; *"Liqa-*

i-Ilahi" is the word which he uses; he who is desirous of *Liqa-i-Ilahi*, of meeting his God, of standing in the presence of God, face to face with his God, he who is prepared to sacrifice his life along with me, let him come with me, he will be welcomed. As far as I am concerned, I am starting tomorrow morning". That journey from *Khalq* to God, that journey from the world to God *'Minal Khalq Ilallah'* that ascention, that *Mairaj*, Husain is going to meet his God.

These people of Kufa, are as good or as bad as people generally are; some good, many bad. They have their own aspirations. Every man has his aspirations, his ideals, his dreams. There is a passion in man for light as he is groping in the darkness; but then there are so many weaknesses within and, so many pressures and temptations all around. The fear of death, and of kith and kin, the addiction, holds a man back and he cannot follow the light and he defaults. He can stand in congregation of hundreds behind the emissary of Husain, Muslim Bin Aqil and along with them pledge allegiance to Husain, but then fear drives him alone, exposed to the worst tyrannies. He can see the corpse of Muslim bin Aqil being dragged on the streets of Kufa and shudder and do nothing. Such is the nature of man; the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, "Oh! *Maula*, the hearts are with you, but the swords are turned against, you" the words of the poet Farazdaq in which he related to Husain the situation of Kufa are, as it were, a symbol, a similitude for humanity, for weak humanity, for faltering humanity.

Despite everything, the journey of Husain continues. Hussain's army is being recruited, sifted. It will be the army of the elect, properly sifted. Many people are rejected, sent back, and some people, a few fortunate persons, those who have qualified themselves for this honour, are being called by special invitations. Habib Ibn-e-Mazahir is being called by

special invitation. He is not a very young warrior, in fact an old man, but Habib has qualified himself to join this force, this *Hizbullah,* this party of God: these are men of God. Those who are not worthy of this honour, they have been rejected and sent back. Thus, every step of this group is bringing them nearer and nearer to God, nearer to the presence of God, nearer to the appointed hour, and the appointed place. They are going, stage by stage, nearing their destination, their meeting with God.

Then finally comes the Night of Destiny, the night of Ashura. Husain has specially asked of the army of Yazid to defer the fateful battle a little and spare this night for him to draw his companions nearer to himself and to draw himself still nearer to his God. And now the lights are put out and Husain praises his companions and thanks them and the relatives. He thanks them for their pledge since their duty is done and the goal achieved and requests them to depart in the darkness of night, preferably with the women and children. The relatives and followers, stand up to protest. They have undying loyalty and eternal solidarity with him. Now you may say that there are 72 Husains there, or you may say that there is just one Husain there, and all his companions have been drawn unto him. The whole night is passed in prayers, an intimate dialogue between God and Husain. Who knows what was asked in that dialogue, what descended from the heaven, what went out to the heaven, what came down from the heavens. There is a joy. Well pleased with Allah; well-pleasing Him. There is an excitement, *"Guzri shab-e-firaq Din aya visaal ka"* Passed is the night of separation; the day of meeting the Beloved has arrived. The blessed Dawn is about to break after long nights of anguish. In the morning we see one man standing, all the spirituality of the Prophets, from Adam to Muhammad concentrated and embodied in him. He is the inheritor of all the

spirituality of the Prophets. He is acting the will of God, and much is at stake. The angels of God are watching the scene, and the forces of history are watching it. And there stands Husain. My friends, as I see it, it is just one man who is being assassinated on that day, bit by bit and limb by limb as Husain had seen in his dream. When Habib falls, or Muslim Ibne Oseja falls, I say the hands and feet of this man, are being chopped off; when his son Ali Akbar falls, I say it is the spearhead that has pierced his heart. When his great brother falls, the brother who was an army in himself, and the hope of all the womenfolk, I say the very back of this man is broken, and there is also an arrow stuck in his throat which makes even his breathing difficult. Thus this man stands firm and undisturbed, performing the task alloted to him by his Lord. resuming the purity of Islam from the machinations of wordly lust, lighting a leading path of life out of the gloom of sin and death, pleading the cause of Man before God and justifying the ways of God to man. The wilderness of agony is converted into a rendezvous with the Friend and every calamity that his foes inflict on him becomes a step that brings him nearer to his God, till in his last *sajda* (the ritual act of obeisance) which he could not finish, he becomes one with God - for all time and Beyond.

Afterwards as the night descends on that plain there is just one tent left. A lady, the venerable sister of Imam Husain herself. She is going around this tent; she will stand guard tonight. The night before, it was Abbas bin Ali who had done that duty. Inside the tent, the new Imam, the sole surviving son of Imam Husain, Imam Zain-ul-Abedin is saying his prayers, *Al Hamd-o-lillah. Shukran-lillah. Al Hamd-o-lillah. Shukran-lillah,* God be praised, God be thanked; a great problem was solved. No doubt, indeed a great problem was solved. A great decision was made, a great decision of history, of hu-

Imam Husain was the symbol of God's guidance on earth; in fact the substance of that guidance. It was his duty and privilege to ensure the purity and vitality of the *"Deen"*. He was the last refuge/resort of *"Deen"* and embodiment of Islam, a living *"Shaheed"*. Islam was his life, his love, the love for which the sacrifice of life was the fulfilment of life.

It is to the tradition of Islamic life and thought, that the event of Karbala belongs. And it is only when it is seen and understood against this background that we can get the full universal meaning out of it.

This book talks about some of the major themes in Islamic thought. It talks about the message of Islam, the seed of faith, the circle of faith, the Islamic Society, Quranic interpretation of rise and fall of nations, the place of *Imamat*, the place of *Amr-e-Hukumat* and *Amr-e-Hidayat*, guidance and governance and gives an insight into the event of Karbala, and mission of Imam Husain

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